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THE POETICAL WORKS OF
ROSE HARTWICK THORPE





Rose Hartwick Thorpe

253
The POETICAL WORKS *of*
ROSE HARTWICK
THORPE

II
COMPILED BY THE AUTHOR



NEW YORK
THE NEALE PUBLISHING COMPANY
1912

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1912

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
BALLADS.	9
Curfew Must Not Ring To-night	11
The Station Agent's Story	14
In a Mining Town	18
Saved and Savior	20
The Soldier's Reprieve	23
His Christmas Gift	25
Margaret	29
The Bridge of San Martin	31
Down the Track	33
Remember the Alamo	34
The Hero of Conemaugh	40
In Answer	41
Inspiration	43
Cain	45
The Emperor's Ring	47
The Queen and the Beggar's Child	48
Drifted Out to Sea	49
The Luck of Muncaster	51
A Brave Emperor	54
When the Christ-Child Came	55
Their Thanksgiving Day	56
Under the Curfew Bell	58
The Feast of Cherries	60
SHORTER POEMS	63
Life	65
Whom Others Envy	65
Affliction's Need	66
The Germ of Life	66
If We Knew	67
The Perfect Test	67
How to be Happy	68
Mother of Mine	69
Forgetting	69
Easter Bells	70
Life's Peaceful Twilight	70
The Two Kings	71
His Second Coming	72

	PAGE
Wrecked	73
Who Can Tell?	74
Nothing Lost	74
The Test of Age	75
The Bells of Life	76
Song of the Thankful Time	77
The Birds Thanksgiving	78
Drifting Away	79
October	80
How the Flowers Came	80
A Better Toy	81
God's Way is Best	82
Thanksgiving	83
Where is Heaven?	84
Two Days	84
Woman's Life	85
A Time of Peace	85
Love Triumphs	86
The Sweetest Flower	86
An Open Secret	87
Deeds are Thoughts	88
A Noble Warrior	88
Thoughts	88
A Mother's Wish	89
Among Her Flowers	89
Keep the Heart Young	90
Easter Lines	91
The Greatest Good	91
Who Knows?	92
The Betrothal	92
Lilies of Faith	93
Her First Long Dress	94
Tourists	94
Love's Avowal	95
The Sweet Old Story	96
Assurance	96
Nepenthe	97
Linnet	97
A City Cañon	98
A Toast	98
Beauty	98
Truth in Fiction	99
Woman	100
Labor Versus Capital	101
No Perfect Work but God's	102
Truth	103
Progress	103

TABLE OF CONTENTS

9

	PAGE
Dreams	104
Why?	105
Rio Grande	105
The Last Night	106
California	107
San Diego	108
La Jolla	108
The California Poppy	109
Sunset on the Pacific Coast	109
A Prophecy	110
A Prayer	112

RHYMES FOR THE CHILDREN 113

The Queen's Gift	115
Cripple Joe	117
What Santa Claus Brought	119
The Christmas Doll	120
Four Little Girls	121
Little Bird Gray	122
Where They Found Him	123
What Cured Dolly	124
Mamma's Helpers	125
Contented Ted	126
February in California	127
Mud Pies	128
When I am a Man	128
Two Bens	130
A Kiss for Mamma	131
Mamma's Bread Winners	131
Two Little Beggars	132
Putting the Flowers to Bed	133
A Song of the Schoolroom	134
The Drink of God	134
The Disobedient Doll	135
Indian Lullaby	135
A Lullaby Song	136
The White Parade	137

CURFEW MUST NOT RING TO-NIGHT

ENGLAND'S sun was slowly setting o'er the hill-
tops far away,
Filling all the land with beauty at the close of one sad
day;
And its last rays kissed the forehead of a man and
maiden fair,—
He with footsteps slow and weary; she with sunny,
floating hair;
He with bowed head, sad and thoughtful; she with lips
so cold and white,
Struggled to keep back the murmur, "Curfew must
not ring to-night."

"Sexton," Bessie's white lips faltered, pointing to the
prison old,
With its walls so tall and gloomy, moss-grown walls
dark, damp and cold,—
"I've a lover in that prison, doomed this very night
to die
At the ringing of the curfew, and no earthly help is
nigh.
Cromwell will not come till sunset;" and her lips
grew strangely white,
As she spoke in husky whispers, "Curfew must not
ring to-night."

"Bessie," calmly spoke the sexton (every word pierced
her young heart
Like a gleaming death-winged arrow, like a deadly
poisoned dart).
"Long, long years I've rung the curfew from that
gloomy shadowed tower;

Every evening, just at sunset, it has tolled the twilight hour.

I have done my duty ever, with a purpose just and right.

Now I'm old I will not miss it. Curfew bell must ring to-night!"

Wild her eyes and pale her features, stern and white her thoughtful brow;

And within her heart's deep center Bessie made a solemn vow.

She had listened while the judges read, without a tear or sigh,—

"At the ringing of the curfew Basil Underwood *must die.*"

And her breath came fast and faster, and her eyes grew large and bright;

One low murmur, faintly spoken, "Curfew must not ring to-night!"

She with quick step bounded forward, sprang within the old church-door,

Left the old man coming slowly, paths he'd trod so oft before.

Not one moment paused the maiden, but, with cheek and brow aglow,

Staggered up the gloomy tower, where the bell swung to and fro;

As she climbed the slimy ladder, on which fell no ray of light,

Upward still, her lips repeating, "Curfew *shall not* ring to-night!"

She has reached the topmost ladder; o'er her hangs the great, dark bell;

Awful is the gloom beneath her, like the pathway down to hell.

See! the ponderous tongue is swinging; 'tis the hour
of curfew now,
And the sight has chilled her bosom, stopped her breath,
and paled her brow.
Shall she let it ring? No, never! Her eyes flash with
sudden light,
As she springs, and grasps it firmly: "Curfew shall
not ring to-night!"

Out she swung,— far out. The city seemed a speck of
light below,—
There 'twixt heaven and earth suspended, as the bell
swung to and fro,
And the sexton at the bell-rope, old and deaf, heard not
the bell,
Sadly thought that twilight curfew rang young Basil's
funeral knell,
Still the maiden, clinging firmly, quivering lip and fair
face white,
Hushed her frightened heart's wild throbbings: "*Cur-
few shall not ring to-night!*"

It was o'er, the bell ceased swaying; and the maiden
stepped once more
Firmly on the damp old ladder, where, for hundred
years before,
Human foot had not been planted. The brave deed
that she had done
Should be told long ages after. As the rays of setting
sun
Light the sky with golden beauty, sires and dames, with
heads of white.
Tell the children why the curfew did not ring that one
sad night.

O'er the distant hills comes Cromwell. Bessie sees
him, and her brow

Lately white with sickening horror, has no anxious traces now.

At his feet she tells her story, shows her hands, all bruised and torn;

And her sweet young face, still haggard, with the anguish it had worn,

Touched his heart with sudden pity, lit his eyes with misty light.

“Go! your lover lives,” cried Cromwell. “Curfew shall not ring to-night.”

Wide they flung the massive portals, led the prisoner forth to die.

In the morning of his manhood. 'Neath the darkening English sky.

Bessie came with flying footsteps, eyes aglow with love light sweet;

Kneeling on the turf beside him, laid his pardon at his feet.

In his brave, strong arms he clasped her, kissed her face upturned and white,

Whispered, “Darling, you have saved me, curfew will not ring to-night.”

THE STATION AGENT'S STORY

TAKE a seat in the shade here, lady; it's tiresome, I know, to wait;

But when the train reaches Verona it's almost sure to be late,—

'Specially when any one's waitin'. Been gatherin' flowers, I see?

Ah, well! they're better company than a rough old fellow like me.

You noticed the graves 'neath the willows, down there
where the blossoms grew?
Well, yes, there's a story about them, almost too
strange to be true;
'Tis a stranger, sweeter story than was ever written
in books;
And God made the endin' so perfect — There, now I
see by your looks

I will have to tell the story: Let me see; 'twas eight
years ago,
One blusterin' night in winter, when the air was thick
with snow;
As the freight came round the curve there they be-
held a man on the track,
Bravin' the storm before him, but not heedin' the foe
at his back.

And ere a hand could grasp the bell-rope, or a finger
reach the rod,
One sweep from the cruel snow-plough had sent the
man's soul to its God!
They laid him out here in the freight-house. I stayed
with him that night;
He'd one of the pleasantest faces, so hopeful and young
and bright.

There was only a worn-out letter; I know it by heart —
it said:
“Dear John: Baby May grows finely. I send you
this curl from her head.
We will meet you at Brackenboro'. The grandfather's
sad and lone,
But I read him your kind words, sayin', when we've
a home of our own,

He shall sing the songs of old England beneath our
own willow tree."

That was all there was of it, lady, and 't was signed
just "Alice Leigh."

So we made him a grave in the mornin' and buried
the man out there,

Alone, unmourned, in a stranger's land, with only a
stranger's prayer.

But when he'd slept in his lonely grave out there nigh
on to a year,

Ray's freight ran into a washout by the culvert, away
down here;

There were only two passengers that night, dead when
we found them there,—

A sweet little English woman, and a baby with golden
hair.

On her breast lay the laughing baby, with its rosy
finger-tips

Still warm, and the fair young mother with a frozen
smile on her lips.

We laid them out here in the freight-house, I stayed
that night with the dead;

I shall never forget the letter we found in her purse;
it said:

"Dear Alice: Praise God I've got here! I'll soon
have a home for you now;

But you must come with the baby as soon as you can
anyhow.

Comfort the grandfather, and tell him that by and by
he shall come,

And sing the songs of old England 'neath the willows
beside our home;

For, close by the door of our cottage I'll set out a wil-
low tree,
For his sake and the sake of old England. Lovingly
yours, John Leigh."

The tears filled my eyes as I read it; but I whispered,
"God is just!"
For I knew that the true heart yonder — then only a
handful of dust —
Had drawn this sweet little woman right here, and
God's merciful love
Had taken her from the sorrow to the glad reunion
above!

So, close by the grave of the other we laid her away
to rest,—
The golden-haired English mother, with the baby upon
her breast.
I planted those trees above them, for I knew their story,
you see;
And I thought their rest would be sweeter 'neath their
own loved willow tree.

Five years rolled along; and, lady, my story may now
seem to you
Like a wonderful piece of fiction; but I tell you it is
true,—
As true as that God is above us! One summer day, hot
and clear,
As the train rolled into the station, and stopped to
change engines here.

Among a company of Mormons came a tremblin' white-
haired man;
He asked me in waverin' accents: "Will you tell me,
sir, if you can,

Of a place called Brackenboro'? and how far have I
yet to go?"

"It's the next station north," I answered, "only thir-
teen miles below."

His old face lit up for a moment with a look of joy
complete;

Then he threw up his hands toward heaven, and dropped
down dead at my feet!

"Old Hugh Leigh is dead!" said a Mormon, "and
sights o' trouble he's be'n.

Nothin' would do when we started but that he must
come with us then

To find Alice, John, and the baby; and his heart was
well-nigh broke

With waitin' and watchin' in England for letters they
never wrote."

So we buried him there with the others, beneath the
willow tree.

'Twas God's way of endin' the story—more perfect
than man's could be.

IN A MINING TOWN

“‘TIS the last time, darling,” he gently said,
As he kissed her lips like the cherries red.
While a fond look shone in his eye of brown:
“My own is the prettiest girl in town,
To-morrow the bell from the tower will ring
A joyful peal. Was there ever a king
So truly blest, on his royal throne,
As I shall be when I claim my own!”

'Twas a fond farewell; 'twas a sweet good-by;
But she watched him go with a troubled sigh,
As into the basket, that swayed and swung
O'er the yawning abyss, he lightly sprung;
And the joy of her heart seemed turned to woe
As they lowered him into the depths below.
Her sweet young face, with its tresses brown,
Was the fairest face in the mining town.

Lo, the morning came! but the marriage-bell
High up in the tower rang a mournful knell
For the true heart buried 'neath earth and stone,
Far down in the heart of the mine alone,—
A sorrowful peal on their wedding-day
For the breaking heart and the heart of clay;
And the face looking out from her tresses brown
Was the saddest face in the mining town.

Thus time rolled along on its weary way,
Until fifty years with their shadows gray
Had darkened the light of her sweet eyes' glow,
And had turned the brown of her hair to snow.
Oh! never a kiss from a husband's lips,
Or the clasp of a child's sweet finger-tips,
Had lifted one moment the shadows brown
From the saddest heart in the mining town!

Far down in the depths of the mine, one day
In the loosened earth they were digging away,
They discovered a face, so young, so fair;
From the smiling lips to the red-gold hair
Untouched by the finger of Time's decay,
When they drew him up to the light of day,
The wondering people gathered round
To gaze on the man thus strangely found.

Then a woman came from among the crowd,
With her long white hair, and her slight form bowed.
She silently knelt by the form of clay,
And kissed the lips that were cold and gray.
Then the sad old face, with its snowy hair
On his youthful bosom lay pillowed there.
He had found her at last his waiting bride,
And the people buried them side by side.

SAVED AND SAVIOR

MORNING came with laggard footsteps,
Lifting her reluctant face
O'er the mists that hung like specters
Of freed souls above the place
Where Death reigned through long night watches;
Where a helpless ship was tossed
Like a toy upon the billows,
Off the stormy German coast.

On the shore stern faces gathered;
Stalwart figures, drenched with sleet;
Pallid women, kneeling, praying,
Where the land and waters meet.
Men whose lives had known its dangers,
Brave and strong, with true hearts warm,
Stood appalled before the terrors
Of that wild December storm.

When the morning light grew brighter,
The pale watchers, young and old,
Saw a black hull, rising, sinking,
As the waters o'er it rolled.

On the shattered mast, uplifted
In the fury of the storm,
Clinging wildly, and despairing,
Hung a single human form.

Women hide their faces, weeping;
Strong men turn aside their eyes;
One, a youth in early manhood,
Springs to where the life-boat lies.
But a woman's arms are round him,
Clinging fiercely, clasping tight,
And her pleading face, uplifted
In the gray dawn, showeth white.

Sweetheart? No. Her eyes are shadowed
By too many falling tears,
And her unbound hair is whitened
By the sorrows of long years.
Mother? Yes, and pressing closer —
"Richard, dearest, stay with me!
'Tis enough that I have given
One already, to the sea.

Only you are left to cheer me.
Let some other mother's son
Brave the dangers for this stranger;
God requires of me but one,
And the ocean hath thy brother!
Oh, my dear one, do not go."
To his breast he clasped his mother;
Clasped her fondly. Bending low,

Kissed her lips, her cheek, her forehead —
"Mother, dearest, that sad night,
Near a foreign shore, he perished,
With the land and men in sight.

We have named each man a coward,
Who stood there and saw him die,
Though the tempest was against them,
And the waves ran mountains high."

Still the mother, clinging to him,
Pressed to his her face of woe.
"It is folly, it is madness!
Oh, my darling, do not go."
"Somewhere in the world," he answered,
"With her prayerful eyes grown dim
By long vigils, oft' repeated,
His old mother waits for him."
"Go, my son, and God go with you!"
At his feet she dropped in prayer.
And the wind that swept about her,
Wrapped her in her long gray hair.

Thrice the boat was launched, thrice driven
Backward by that stronger power.
But his God-like will, persistent,
Conquered in that troubled hour.
Now the life-boat rides the billows;
Now the billows rise above.
Hope and fear in quick succession,
Rend that mother's heart of love.

Inch by inch the boat advances.
Sinewy arms and love divine
Urge it onward, though against it
Strength of wind and sea combine.
"Courage!" calls a strong voice, bravely,
O'er the intervening track.
"Hasten! I can hold no longer,"
Fainter comes the answer back.

Higher leap the mad waves, clutching
With white fingers at the sky,
And the watchers, watching breathless,
See the life-boat drawing nigh.
Saved and savior, how they cheer them!
And a dozen hands reach out.
Men rush waist-deep through the water;
Women sob, and children shout,
But the hero, with the halo
Of a wonderous joy confest,
Bears his burden to his mother;
Lays the wan face on her breast.

“Take the gift,”—What sudden gladness
Makes a glory in her eyes?
'Tis the long lost son and brother
Living, on her bosom lies!
And the dauntless young deliverer,
In unselfish love, alone
Daring for a stranger mother,
Wins God's mercy for his own.

THE SOLDIER'S REPRIEVE

“MY Fred! I can't understand it,”
And his voice quivered with pain,
While the tears kept slowly dropping
On his trembling hands like rain.
“For Fred was so brave and loyal;
So true—but my eyes are dim,
And I cannot read the letter,
The last I shall get from him.
Please read it, sir, while I listen—
In fancy I see him—dead;
My boy, shot down like a traitor.
My noble, my brave boy Fred.”

“Dear Father,”—so ran the letter,—
“To-morrow when twilight creeps
Along the hill to the churchyard,
O'er the grave where mother sleeps.
When the dusky shadows gather,
They'll lay your boy in his grave
For nearly betraying the country
He would give his life to save.
And, father, I tell you truly,
With almost my latest breath,
That your boy is not a traitor,
Though he dies a traitor's death.

“You remember Bennie Wilson?
He's suffered a deal of pain.
He was only that day ordered
Back into the ranks again.
I carried all of his luggage
With mine, on the march that day;
I gave him my arm to lean on,
Else he had dropped by the way.
'Twas Bennie's turn to be sentry;
But I took his place, and I—
Father, I fell asleep, and now
I must die as traitors die.

“The Colonel is kind and generous,
He has done the best he can.
And they will not bind or blind me—
I shall meet death like a man.
Kiss little Blossom; but, father,
Need you tell her how I fall?”
A sob from the shadowed corner,—
Yes, Blossom had heard it all!
As she kissed the precious letter
She said with faltering breath,
“Our Fred was never a traitor,
Though he dies a traitor's death.”

And a little sun-brown maiden,
In a shabby time-worn dress,
Took her seat a half-hour later
In the crowded night express.
The conductor heard her story
As he held her dimpled hand,
And sighed for the sad hearts breaking
All over the troubled land.
He tenderly dried the teardrops
From her blue eyes brimming o'er,
And guarded her footsteps safely
Till she reached the White House door.

The President sat at his writing;
But the eyes were kind and mild
That turned with a look of wonder
On the little shy-faced child.
And he read Fred's farewell letter
With a look of sad regret.
" 'Tis a brave young life," he murmured,
" And his country needs him yet.
From an honored place in battle
He shall bid the world good-by;
If that brave young life is needed,
He shall die as heroes die."

HIS CHRISTMAS GIFT

IF there's one thing makes me happy, more 'n another,
'tis to sit
Here above that little valley, lookin' right down into it.
It reminds me of the Christmas present I brought home
last year;
One o' them queer circumstances people like to tell,
an' hear.

I'm a rough, plain spoken farmer, as most any one can see,

An' the story'll get no fancy touches if it comes from me.

But you'd like to hear me tell it? Well, sit down there in the shade.

Right below us is the finest picture God has ever made. Rest your eyes there while I'm talkin'. I'm a rough man, as you see—

Where Joe got his artist talent is a mystery to me.

For the only brush I've handled was to paint the old cow-shed,

An' his mother wastes her talents makin' pies, an' bakin' bread.

Say! but I *was* proud to win her. Finest lass for miles about.

Hair the color o' the cowslips from the meadows peepin' out;

Cheeks as red as Seek-no-furthers; eyes—Excuse me, there I go

Takin' up the time with Lucy, when you want it spent on Joe.

Joe, our black sheep, always riled me, didn't care for work like Jim,

Spent his time in idle dreamin'. But his mother favored him.

Couldn't help it. 'Twas her nature. Always loved the weakest things;

Had good words for ev'rybody; took the pizen out o' stings;

Said Joe's laziness was talent; loved her stalwart laddies too;

But the weak one was her fav'rite—what else could his mother do?

I was always pickin' at him, and 'twas plain enough to
see

That there wasn't much affection wasted 'twixt the
lad an' me.

Such things can't go on forever, an' one day we had a
row.

I was mad, an' said a good deal I don't like to think of
now.

Then his mother pleaded for him with her face all wet
with tears,

Said that he would be an honor to us in the comin'
years.

How I scoffed at that, an' told him to go earn his livin'
then.

He was welcome to his dollars, I'd share mine with
Jim, an' Ben.

That was five years last November. Lucy's face was in
its prime,

With the light o' girlhood on it; just toned down a
bit by time;

But it saddened, an' it whitened, an' I watched her, day
by day,

With a heartache I can't tell you, as her brown hair
turned to gray.

More than Joe had ever cost me I spent in my search
for him,

While his mother's face grew sadder, an' her watchin'
eyes grew dim.

Turn again toward the valley. There's a picture worth
your while,

With the sunlight restin' on it like the touch o' God's
own smile,

Keep your eyes there while I'm talkin'. You'll not
see the like again.

Gradu'ly I turned home matters over to the care o'
Ben,
An' I spent my time with business. Though the home
folks didn't know
I was seekin' among th' lowly for my Lucy's lost
boy Joe.

I was just about discouraged when, as Christmas time
drew nigh,
I was lookin' at some presents, thinkin' what I'd better
buy,
An' I heard the people talkin', on the street, an' ev'ry
where,
'Bout a paintin', an' a fortune offered by a millionaire
To the artist for his picture, but he wouldn't let it go.
So, I paid the price to see it, thinkin' all the while o'
Joe.

Joe — a-wanderin', most likely homeless, friendless.
First I knew
I was in the crowd before it. 'Twixt two heads a bit
o' blue
Caught my eye, an' then I saw it all just as you see
it there
In God's paintin'. That green valley, with the sun-
shine in the air,
With the river runnin' through it, an' two clouds, like
banks o' snow,
An' I knew that he had done it. Joe, my Lucy's lost
boy, Joe.

"Joe," I cried, "come home to mother." An' the people
thought me mad,
When I climbed an' kissed the picture, for the sake o'
Lucy's lad.
But a man stepped out before them, with a face I didn't
know;

Took me in his arms, an' called me:—"Father!" in
the voice o' Joe.
Then he stood right there before me like a king, so
tall, an' grand;
Joe, for whom I'd been a-seekin' among th' lowly o'
the land.

Christmas morn you should 'a' seen me, steppin' as
though I walked on air.
Happy? There was not a youngster half so happy
anywhere.
An' when I brought out my present smuggled in upon
the sly,
Lucy—now ain't women queer though? When
they're glad they always cry—
Yes, Joe's welcome home was something to remember.
Ben an' Jim.
An' the family altogether's everlastin' proud o' him.

MARGARET

FAIR Margaret! beautiful Margaret!
In the hush of the twilight cold.
The sun on a dazzling throne has set
In a cloud of amber and gold;
And the great green waves, with their white caps wet,
O'er the beach to her feet have rolled.

She waits for the lover whose kiss one day
Was pressed on her quivering lips,—
The lover who sailed from her side away
In one of those swift-sailing ships
O'er the waves that bright in the sunlight lay
'Neath the glow of its finger-tips.

Oh, the sea! the angry tempest-tost sea!
The sea with its roar and its gloom,—
The treacherous sea, how it shouts in glee
O'er each jewel-decked coral tomb!
The glorious, peaceful, resplendent sea,
In the light of a golden noon.

Whenever the shadowy twilight creeps
O'er the earth, with her fair feet wet,—
When the stars come out and the great world sleeps.
When the murmuring waters fret
On the sandy shore,— then she waits and weeps,
Lonely, sorrowful Margaret.

There she sits alone 'mid the gleaming sands,
By the shadowy ivied wall,
While over the clasp of her trembling hands
Like a shower the tear drops fall;
And the sea brings murmurs of far-off lands.
And the blue sky bends over all.

“ Oh, bring back my lover to me! ” she cries,
As she sits by the sea alone.
“ Oh, pitiful Father in Paradise!
Stoop down from thy glorious throne,
And grant to the light of my waiting eyes
One glimpse of his face,— only one! ”

Now the sea rolls in with a mighty swell,—
Will it bring a curse, or a crown?
For, alas! no echoing whispers tell
Of the home-bound ship that went down
'Mid the hidden reefs, with never a knell
From the slumbering harbor town.

Oh, beautiful Margaret, pale and fair!
By the sea no longer alone;
For two faces lie in the starlight there,
With features like chiseled stone,
And the seaweed drifts from his tangled hair
To the sunny locks of her own.

THE BRIDGE OF SAN MARTIN

“**B**UILD the bridge of San Martin across the rapid
stream;
Across the dashing Tagus, whose waters flash and
gleam,
Whose angry, raging billows, foam-crested as they
flow,
Send back a roar defiant from out the depths below.”

“But who shall plan the structure?” Black sweeps the
swollen tide,
While anxious faces gather dark-browed on either side.
And, lo! before Tenorio a youthful form appears,
Tall, dark, and slender, seeming a very boy in years.

“But what pledge can *you* offer, that our trust be not
vain?”
Across the young face hopeful there swept a dash of
pain.
One glance, half love, half pity, he gave his girlish
wife,
Then said “I pledge my honor,—my honor and my
life.

“When they remove the scaffold which holds the arch
of stone,
I’ll stand upon the center of the great new bridge
alone

And if the crowning glory of all my heart's desire
Is wrecked, with it I perish. What more would you
require?"

Behold the work completed! To-morrow's light shall
see
The great bridge of San Martin from all support cut
free!
But he who watched its progress with heart and eye
aglow,
Beside fair Catalina sits wrapt in deepest woe.

"To-morrow morn the people will gather on the shore,
And I shall see the sun rise o'er Spain's green hills
once more;
Once more I'll clasp you, darling, close to my break-
ing heart,
Before that awful moment in which I take a part.

"A single fatal error! To-morrow's sun will gleam
Upon the bridge and builder wrecked on the raging
stream,
Ah! death indeed were welcome, forgetfulness were
kind,
To veil the dark dishonor and shame I leave behind."

No word spoke Catalina, but when he sought his bed
To the bridge of San Martin she flew with noiseless
tread.
A lurid spark she kindled, the night-winds fanned the
flame,
And soon the fiery billows had saved her husband's
name.

The new bridge of San Martin from out the dust and
flame
Reared high in massive grandeur, a monument of
fame
To crown the youthful builder. Complete in every
part,
His name's enshrined with honor in every Spaniard's
heart.

DOWN THE TRACK

IN the deepening shades of twilight
Stood a maiden, young and fair;
Rain-drops gleamed on cheek and forehead,
Rain-drops glistened in her hair.
Where the bridge had stood at morning
Yawned a chasm deep and black;
Faintly came the distant rumbling
From the train far down the track.

Paler grew her marble features;
Faster came her frightened breath,—
Charlie kissed her lips at morning,—
Charlie rushing down to death!
Must she stand and see him perish?
Angry waters answer back;
Louder comes the distant rumbling
From the train far down the track.

At death's door faint hearts grow fearless
Miracles are sometimes wrought,
Springing from the heart's devotion
In the forming of a thought.
From her waist she tears her apron,
Flings her tangled tresses back,
Working fast and praying ever
For that train far down the track.

See! a lurid spark is kindled,
Right and left she flings the flame.
Turns and speeds with airy fleetness
Downward toward the coming train;
Sees the red eye gleaming nearer,
Through the shadows dense and black.
Hark! a shriek prolonged and deafening,—
They have seen her down the track.

Onward comes the train,— now slower,
But the maiden, where is she?
Flaming torch and flying footsteps,
Fond eyes gaze in vain to see.
With a white face turned to heaven,
All her sunny hair thrown back.
There they found her, one hand lying
Crushed and bleeding on the track.

Eager faces bent above her.
Wet eyes pitied, kind lips blest;
But she saw no face save Charlie's,—
'T was for him she saved the rest.
Gold they gave her from their bounty;
But her sweet eyes wandered back
To the one whose love will scatter
Roses all along life's track.

REMEMBER THE ALAMO *

TWO student lads one morning met
Under the blue-domed Texas skies;
Strangers by birth and station, yet
Youth's heart lies close beneath its eyes.

* The battle cry of San Jacinto.

A thousand miles lay 'twixt their homes,
Watered by many a crystal stream;
Dame Nature reared a thousand domes,
And spread a thousand plains between.
They met, clasped hands, scorned bolt and bar.
Which cautious age puts on the heart;
Shared room and purse, then wandered far
By quiet ways and busy mart.
By San Antonio's winding stream,
Through narrow streets, the two lads passed,
Saw antique ruins, like some dream
Of ancient times.

They came at last,
Where the Alamo's moss-grown walls
Stand gray and silent in the sun.
Where'er its somber shadow falls
Is hallowed ground,—more sacred none!
Within its portals stood a man
Like some grim shadow on Time's shore,
Gray as the walls about him, and
Like them a memory, nothing more,—
A page from out the deathless past!
Through film of years, and rising smoke
From his old pipe, he saw at last
The stranger lads, then gravely spoke

“Come you to worship at our shrine,
The shrine o' Texas liberty?
Or come to speed the work o' time,
An' mar these stones grown dear to me?
Rome had her heroes, so have we;
I don't know what the big word means,
But this is *our* Thermopylæ.
An' matches Rome's for bloody scenes.
My story?

“ ’Tisn’t much to tell,
 ’Twas more to live, but e’en that seems,
 At times, a sort o’ misty spell,—
 A somethin’ shaped from dreamin’ dreams.
 An’ then again ’tis wondrous real;
 I seem to see the smokin’ plains.
 I hear the cannon’s roar, an’ feel
 The young blood rushin’ through my veins,
 For I was with Sam Houston there
 At San Jacinto.

“All the tricks
 That sneekin’ Mexicans will dare,
 An’ did, we paid in ’36.
 We were three brothers.

“Brother Jim
 The tallest, stoutest o’ the three,
 Then me, hot-headed, next to him,
 An’ Will was mother’s pet, you see!
 For Will was slender, like a girl,
 Brave at the heart an’ true as steel;
 An’ me an’ Jim, long side o’ him,
 Were not much ’count.

“The past seems real
 Enough just now. My eyes are dim,
 Grown weak with years. Well, lads, we three
 Shouldered our muskets. Brother Jim
 Was here with Travis. Will an’ me
 Heard how our Texas heroes fought
 With death behind an’ death before.
 To right an’ left o’ them, an’ naught
 But death when they could fight no more.
 It fires my blood to think o’ it.
 The awful scene comes back to me.

How, like wild beasts trapped in a pit
They fought, as round 'em surged a sea
O' swarthy faces, black with hate
Like their black hearts.

“Six thousand strong
They swarmed about, nor wall, nor gate,
Nor rifle-shot could hold 'em long.
Like flies about a pot o' sweet.
Like savage fiends let loose from hell,
Like starvin' wolves in sight o' meat,
They filled the place.

“There Crockett fell,
Here Bowie, on his dyin' bed
Was butchered, so was all o' them.
This room was filled with Texans dead.
The bravest, truest, *best* o' men.”

The old man paused. Low drooped his head;
Upon his breast his beard lay white.
“These dead men nerved our arms,” he said,
“For somethin' more than human might.
Will flushed up when he spoke Jim's name;
There wasn't time for weepin' then,
But in his eyes I saw the flame
That burns the softness out o' men.
We were at Colita.

“Mayhap you
Have read the story? Fannin's men
'Gainst fearful odds surrendered. True
Their numbers sort o' scart us then,
But later we forgot all fear,
An' fought like men gone sudden mad.

They wrote their own death-warrant *here*,
 But *it was signed at Goliad*.
 Yes, we were prisoners, confined
 At Goliad, but soon to be
 Sent home, an' so we didn't mind
 Our prison walls, for Will an' me
 Still had each other.

“ That last night
 We, a right jolly set o' men,
 Sang 'Home, Sweet Home' with all our might,
 An' talked o' home like boys o' ten.
 I reckon that with home so near,
 An' mother, too, we grew a bit
 Soft-hearted. Will dashed off a tear
 Quick like as if ashamed o' it.
 An' me —

“ Well, mornin' came, an' we
 Were ordered out. The air was sweet
 With scent o' flowers. I seem to see
 The posies noddin' at our feet,
 As their wee faces nodded there
 Beside the Mission walls, where we
 In long lines stood with freezin' blood
 A-waitin' for the liberty
 They promised us. My God! it came
 Too soon! 'Twas home we'd thought about,
 An' wife an' child, but not the flame
 O' death that let our life-blood out.
 One wild thought o' the future, then
 A flash o' fire an' nothin'ness.
Shot down like dogs. Three hundred men
 Sent home! 'Twas murder, nothin' less.

“ All day I lay there feignin' death
 Among the dead, an' when the night

Came on, I searched with pantin' breath
For Will's dead face, in the dim light.
Yes, lads, I found him where he fell,
An' kneelin' 'neath the starry skies —
Mayhap 't want soldier-like, but — well
I choked, an' somethin' filled my eyes.
I can't tell how I got away.
I reckon angel wings swooped down,
An' sort o' hid me night an' day,
For eyes were peerin' all around.
An' *I* was saved. I don't know why,
Unless God sent an' drafted me
From 'mong the dead to start the cry
That gave us Texas liberty.
How did it end?

“No Texas lad

Would ask me that. I reckon you
Came from the north? Well, lads, we had
Our 'counts all ready, what was due
Us marked in figures plain, then we
At San Jacinto took our pay.
The price we set was *Liberty*;
An' it was paid that very day,
An' they were two to one of us;
But we went in for vengeance then.
The Alamo dead stood side of us
An' gave each man the strength o' ten.
The plan o' battle?

“I can't tell,

Somehow my brain forgets the plan,
But white flowers turned to red where fell
Each sneakin', savage Mexican.
The debt o' blood we paid in blood
'Remember, boys, the Alamo!'
Fired every Texan where he stood.

An' nerved his arm for deadly blow.
We whipped 'em, lads, an' Liberty
Was born, that day, through fire an' smoke.
This comrade's all that's left to me."
He lit his clay pipe as he spoke.

THE HERO OF CONEMAUGH

HILLSIDES were rosy with myriad blooms;
Mottled and fragrant with Spring's sweet flowers;
Her eyes laughed out through her golden noons,
And gazed through mist of her rainbow showers.

High on the hills the whispering pines,
Low in the valley the peaceful homes,
Clang of factories and toil of mines,
Cities shadowed by emerald domes.

Through the long valley the river ran;
Angry and swollen came sweeping down.
Under the high-walled works of man;
Under the bridges to Pittsburg town.

Hark! in the distance a voice is heard,
And far, faint tread of steel-shod feet,
A whisper, an echo, a louder word,
A whirlwind of dust, a shout in the street.

"To the hills, for your lives!" the warning cry
Sweeps like the mad tornado's breath.
Afar on the wind like a troubled sigh,
Comes a roar, the onward rush of Death.

And fast, and faster the rider rides,
His voice grown hoarse with his warning cry.
His spurs strike deep in the blood-flecked sides
Of his panting steed as he hurries by.

But faster than steed of flesh and blood
 Rides Death on his tall white horse behind.
 High on the crest of the raging flood;
 The rushing flood that no man can bind.

Oh, brave young messenger, turn your face
 To the hills of safety. Tempt not fate,
 For Death is riding a winning race.
 He gains upon you. *Too late, too late!*

For others' safety the brave boy died,
 Fulfilling his life's diviner law.
 Time hath no nobler deed beside,
 Than that recorded at Conemaugh.

IN ANSWER

“**M**ADAM, we miss the train at B ——.”
 “But can't you make it, sir?” she asked.
 “Impossible! it leaves at three,
 And we are due a quarter past.”
 “Is there no way? Oh! tell me, then,
 Are you a Christian?” “I am not.”
 “And are there none among the men
 Who run this train?” “No — I forgot —
 I think this fellow over here,
 Oiling the engine, claims to be.”
 She turned upon the engineer
 A fair face white with agony.

“Are you a Christian?” “Yes, I am.”
 “Then, oh, sir, won't you pray with me,
 All the long way, that God will stay,
 That God will hold the train at B ——?”

"Twill do no good. It leaves at three,
 And—" "Yes, but God *can* hold the train;
 My dying child is calling me,
 And I *must* see her once again.
 Oh! *won't you pray?*" "I will!" a nod
 Emphatic, as he takes his place.
 When Christians grasp the arm of God,
 They grasp the power that rules the race.

Out from the station swept the train
 On time,—swept on past wood and lea;
 The engineer, with cheeks aflame,
 Prayed, "Oh, Lord, hold the train at B——!"
 Then flung the throttle wide, and like
 Some giant monster of the plain,
 With panting sides and mighty strides,
 Past hill and valley swept the train.

A half,—a minute,—two are gained;
 Along those burnished lines of steel
 His glances leap, each nerve is strained,
 And still he prays with fervent zeal.
 Heart, hand, and brain with one accord
 Work while his prayer ascends to Heaven:
 "Just hold the train eight minutes, Lord,
 And I'll make up the other seven."

With rush and roar through meadow lands,
 Past cottage homes and green hillsides,
 The panting thing obeys his hands,
 And speeds along with giant strides.
 They say an accident delayed
 The train a little while; but He
 Who listened while His children prayed,
 In answer held the train at B——.

INSPIRATION

LIKE requiem chanted for the dead,
Whose souls have passed life's outer bar,
The last clear note of music sped
Through vaulted dome and corridor;
Then gently rose the murmurous flow
Of thoughts exchanged in converse low.

The grave professors stood apart,
And spoke in deep, melodious tones,
Environed by the "nobler art"
That claims a loftier seat than thrones.

Beside the door a timid lass,
Clad in a faded, tattered gown,
Her wealth of golden hair let down,
Her wide eyes startled with the glow
Of some strange power that held her soul
Entranced with mesmeric control,
Crouched on the marble step below,
And listened till the last sweet strain,
In space had lost its low refrain.

Trembling, she entered at the door;
As in a dream she crossed the floor
To where the rose-wood wonder stood
With ivory keys, and keeling low
She kissed them thrice, while mantling blood
Flushed her young face. Hushed was the flow
Of careless speech. Each matron smiled
Indulgent on the pretty child.

One stern professor raised his hand,
To save that which he valued much
From her lips' sacrilegious touch,
But paused with half expressed command.

O'er either cheek in tongues of flame,
The fluctuating color came,
A surging sea of carmine light.

Then quick upspringing from her knees,
With untrained hand she swept the keys,
And leaping forth into the night
Came wondrous bursts of melody;
Waves of completest harmony.
Pulsating all the midnight air,
As souls have loosed their bonds in prayer.

They hushed their very breath to hear
The wild, weird strains that rose and fell.
Each grave professor bent his ear.
Each smile indulgent turned a tear.

They saw the rapt face, wondrous fair;
The clinging curls of golden hair;
The touch of inspiration's hand
That guided her, and something more,
The wisest could not understand.

Was she an angel sent from Heaven,
And wandering past the open door,
Mistaking it for Paradise,
Had entered in? Like storm-clouds driven
By furious blasts their thoughts were riven
Betwixt conjecture and surprise.

A chord of sweeter melody,
And then a crash. She turned and gazed
As one just waking, frightened, dazed,
Bewildered at the rich display
Of lights — a timid fawn at bay.

Across her face from brow to chin
A quiver swept. Her lashes drooped.
• And closed her startled eyes within.

The stern professor laid his hand,
Upraised in anger, on her head.
“God knows. I cannot understand.
'Tis past the ken of man,” he said.

CAIN

THEY called us twin brothers. Ronald and I;
But I tell you, sir, and I tell you true,
It was nature's caprice that made us two.
The day of our birth a soul cleft in twain,
Was shared by each. Can one-half of man die
While the other half lives? Was Ronald slain?
See! the breath of me is warm on my lips,
And the hot blood leaps to my finger-tips.

Ronald was fair as the face of the sun;
I was as dark as tempestuous night;
Ronald came forth with his soul all in white;
I was a demon let loose upon earth,
Feared and accurst since the day of my birth.
He the good, I the bad, thus we were one.

He was my conscience; my grand, truer part;
I was the stronger of muscle and limb;
Giant, protector, loved only by him.
As man admires strength in himself, so he
With proud egotism gloried in me—
I plated my dross with th' gold of *his* heart.

Twice when death came to him I stepped between;
Once 'twas a mad-dog. I throttled the brute;
Once 'twas a serpent. My arm caught its fang;
As straight at his face the vile reptile sprang.
Here is the place where its poison took root;
Here is the scar of its venomous spleen.

I tell you I loved him. Can man efface
The best of himself in moments of rage?
Can he tear from his life its one white page?
His hope of Heaven? What was it that came
Between us that night like a hellish flame?
Consuming us both in its mad embrace.

It was love! The thing on which homes are built.
It came in the guise of a woman's face,
And confronted us in that lonely place.
We two, being one, had the same desire.
He spoke her name. With my hand on the hilt
Of my sword I listened. Like liquid fire
The burning blood coursed through my swollen veins,
And hardened the length of them into chains.

What happened? I know not. Ronald lay there
At my feet. The sod grew red at his side—
A river of red—crept up to his hair;
Lapped his cheek; spread its gory fingers wide.
A flower dripped it over its brimming cup;
Earth's thirsty lips parted and drank it up.

And straightway an Angel confronted me,
With feet, ankle-deep in that awful wound.
My senses reeled, and the heart of me swooned
At sight of my crime. He reached for my sword,
And traced on my forehead a burning word,
Thus branding me "Cain" for eternity.

THE EMPEROR'S RING

FAIR Spring with buds and blossoms had rounded
out complete,
And all the land was fragrant beneath her dainty feet.
The pearly dew-drops glistened on rose-hedge, bush
and tree,
And flashed their sparkling jewels all over Germany.

The Emperor Joseph pacing, slow-footed down the
street,
Grew tender in his musings, for Spring was young
and sweet.
For him the glad-voiced songsters sent forth their
notes of glee,
And Heaven seemed showering blessings all over Ger-
many.

He met a little maiden with tear-drops in her eyes,
And to his kindly questions she sobbed out low re-
plies.

“My father died in battle, kind sir,” she said, “and
we —

His dear ones now are starving, in his loved Germany.

“The Emperor is mighty, upon the German throne,
What cares he for our sorrows? Oh, sir, could he
but own

A heart as warm and tender as thine, there soon would
be

A sound of thanks ascending all over Germany.

“Ah, child,” he said, “how harshly you judge your
absent king.

Mayhap his heart *is* tender. Here take this little ring;

A passport to the monarch who fills the German throne,
For he who loves his people will make their wrongs
his own."

Within the royal palace, with frightened, down-cast
eyes,
She stood before the monarch in terror and surprise.
"Fear not, my little maiden," he said, "no more for
thee
Shall come despair or hunger in dear old Germany."

THE QUEEN AND THE BEGGAR'S CHILD

SILK and diamonds and trailing lace,
Haughty carriage and fair proud face;
Out from the palace towering high
Grand and gray 'neath the bending sky,
O'er the lawn with its carpet green,
Lightly stepping came Austria's Queen,
Flashing gems in the summer's sun,
Tender mother and queen in one.

Jewels gleam on her royal hands,
Clasp her arms with their shining bands,
Sparkle and glow where the sunbeams fall;
But the most precious of them all
The nurse is guarding with tender care,—
The royal babe, so rosy and fair;
Pressing fond kisses on cheek and brow,
The queen is only a mother now.

Down the lawn, in its shadow deep,
A beggar-woman lies asleep.
Hunger, poverty, pain, and care
Darken the face once young and fair;

There by the wayside, seeking rest,
Clasping a babe upon her breast.
Its hungry wail across the green
Stirs the heart of the mother-queen.

Down on the green grass kneeling low,
Baring her bosom as white as snow,
Laying the child without a name
Where only royal babes have lain.
Feeding it from her own proud breast.
Hungry, starving,—ah! there's the test,—
Mother-love spans the chasm wide;
Queen and station must stand aside!

DRIFTED OUT TO SEA

TWO little ones, grown tired of play,
Roamed by the sea, one summer day,
Watching the great waves come and go,
Prattling as children will, you know,
Of dolls and marbles, kites and strings;
Sometimes hinting at graver things.

At last they spied within their reach
An old boat cast upon the beach.
Helter-skelter, with merry din,
Over its sides they clambered in—
Ben, with his tangled, nut-brown hair,
Bess, with her sweet face flushed and fair.

Rolling in from the briny deep,
Nearer, nearer, the great waves creep,
Higher, higher, upon the sands,
Reaching out with their giant hands,
Grasping the boat in boisterous glee,
Tossing it up and out to sea.

The sun went down 'mid clouds of gold;
Night came, with footsteps damp and cold;
Day dawned; the hours crept slowly by;
And now, across the sunny sky,
A black cloud stretches far away,
And shuts the golden gates of day.

A storm comes on, with flash and roar,
And all the sky is shrouded o'er;
The great waves, rolling from the west,
Bring night and darkness on their breast.
Still floats that boat through driving storm,
Protected by God's powerful arm.

The home-bound vessel, *Seabird*, lies
In ready trim, 'twixt sea and skies.
Her captain paces restless now,
A troubled look upon his brow,
While all his nerves with terror thrill;
The shadow of some coming ill.

The mate comes up to where he stands,
And grasps his arm with eager hands;
"A boat has just swept past," said he,
"Bearing two children out to sea.
'Tis dangerous now to put about,
But they cannot be saved without."

"Naught but their safety will suffice;
They must be saved!" the captain cries.
"By every thought that's just and right;
By lips I hoped to kiss to-night,
I'll peril vessel, life and men,
And God will not forsake me then."

With anxious faces, one and all,
Each man responded to the call;
And when, at last, through driving storm,
They lifted up each little form,
The captain started, with a groan,
"My God!" he cried, "they are my own!"

THE LUCK OF MUNCASTER

A Legend of Merrie England

BESIDE the crystal well she stood,
Fair Marg'ret, Lothar's daughter,
Clear hazel eyes smiled back at her
Up from the sparkling water.
The sunlight fell on tresses bright;
Soft glints of brown and golden,
While at her feet Lord William knelt,
And told the story olden.

An outlaw border chieftain he,
Of haughty face and carriage,
With earnest words, on bended knee
Besought her hand in marriage.
"My life with thine," the lady said,
"Can never be united;
To brave Sir John of Muncaster
This hand of mine is plighted."

"My vengeance," cried the dark-browed Scot,
"On thee, proud Lothar's daughter!
This lord of thine shall not be safe
From me on land or water!"

Disdainful smiled the lady then;
 "Thy threats are unavailing;
While Sir John owns the sacred cup,
 Mischance can ne'er assail him.

"'Twas Henry Sixth pronounced the charm
 (A glass cup was the token),
'In Muncaster good luck shall reign
 Till this charmed cup is broken!'
A hundred years the charm hath held
 Its power beyond undoing;
Good luck attends Muncaster lords
 In battle and in wooing."

"And this the luck of Muncaster?"
 Said the rejected lover.
"The charm hath stood a hundred years,
 It shall not stand another."
Then straight to Carlisle tower he rode:
 "My lord," he cried, "make ready,
For Douglas comes with Scottish hordes!
 Each arm is strong and steady.

"Prepare to give them battle now,
 And mete out justice measure;
Or send some trusted messenger
 For thy most valued treasure,"
"Small treasure have I," Sir John said,
 " But one in casket oaken
I fain would save from plundering hand,
 Untarnished and unbroken.

"Go thou and bring the gem I prize;
 Thou art no foe or stranger,
Else why hast rode this weary way
 To warn me of my danger?"

And ere the bat had winged its flight
Across night's sable curtain
The dark-browed knight of Liddersdale
Had done the errand certain.

"Now by my lady's lips, I swear,
Thy friendship is amazing,"
Cried brave Sir John of Muncaster,
Into the dark face gazing.
"Swear not by lips of her you love,—
You never more shall press them;
Bright are the locks of Marg'ret's hair,—
No more shalt thou caress them."

Exclaimed the fiery Scot in glee,
"I hold the precious token
That binds good luck to thee and thine,—
That charmed spell shall be broken.
Behold I dash it to the earth!
In vain thy deepest regret;
Douglas shall win thy palace tower,
And *I* the lady Marg'ret."

The traitor fled; Sir John sank down
Beside the casket oaken:
O miracle! the crystal cup
Lay there unharmed, unbroken!
Two thousand soldiers came in time
To stay the Douglas slaughter,
And brave Sir John was wedded to
Fair Marg'ret, Lothar's daughter.

A BRAVE EMPEROR

NIGHT rolled its somber curtain back to greet the
dawning day,
Black swept the angry Danube on its terror-freighted
way.
Great blocks of ice came crashing down amid the
torrent's roar,
And seething waters flung their spray upon the ice-
bound shore.

Across that raging, roaring space where Leopoldstadt
lies,
Back to Vienna's listening ear came moans and sobs
and cries,—
Came piteous voices pleading. "We are starving!
bring us bread!"
And white hands reached imploring o'er the waters
dark and dread.

The Emperor Francis Second soon filled the boats with
food;
But who will face the dangers of this angry, seething
flood?
He begs, implores, and threatens: bribes and promises
are vain,
While from his famished people comes that anguished
wail again.

"I cannot see my people starve!" The Emperor
Francis cries;
A quiver thrills his earnest voice, a moisture dims his
eyes.
Alone he leaps into a boat and pushes from the shore;
"They'd give their lives for me," he said, "and I can
do no more."

A hundred men are ready now to brave the swollen
tide.

If death must come to their brave king, they'll meet it
at his side.

Behold they reach the distant shore! The hungry ones
are fed;

And mothers kiss the hands that bring their starving
children bread.

WHEN THE CHRIST-CHILD CAME

THE window blazed out with its Christmas light,
'Twas decked with holly and mistletoe bright;
It was fairy-land. There were sweets and toys,
There were dolls in costume and shepherd boys.
There was Christmas joy in the air about,
But a poor child stood in the cold without,
With her wan, white face, and her tearful eye,
And the happy mothers they passed her by.

“I will stay right here by the Christ-child's home,”
She said, “for at midnight he's sure to come,
I'll wait in the light so he can't forget,
For I've never had any Christmas yet.
He couldn't come into our room so drear,
But the Christ-child will surely find me here,
And he'll bring me a doll like that, or this,
And maybe he'll give me a Christmas kiss.”

At midnight the beautiful Christ-child came,
In garments of light, on a cloud of flame,
He bent o'er the child in that bleak, cold place,
He warmed her, and fed her and kissed her face.

He lifted her out of her life's dark night,
And carried her into the Christmas light.
But when it was morning the people said
That a child was found by the window dead.

THEIR THANKSGIVING DAY

THE floor had been swept, and the furniture dusted,
The table white spread in the neat dining-hall;
The cakes on the pantry shelf, pure snowy crusted;
The pies, custard, pumpkin, mince, apple, and all,
With pans full of doughnuts and cookies, were waiting
To fill up the table in splendid array;
The pink suckling pig, and the turkeys were baking,
And all things were ready for Thanksgiving day.

Once again Grandma Snow looked in at the baking,
While Grandpa looked anxiously out at the door,
Some tenderer thought in their bosoms awaking
Of life's holy mission so soon to be o'er.
At last all was done. By the fire brightly burning
They sat, those two loving ones, aged and gray,
And talked of the children now gladly returning
To father and mother this Thanksgiving day.

"It's time they were coming; why, do you know,
mother,

It seems but a day since the children were here?
A bright, noisy group, playing tag with each other,
And now they come home to us just once a year.
Little Mary will come, our dear little Mary —
Who'd think of our baby as going away
With a stranger! and Tom, from the distant prairie,
Ah, well! they'll be with us this Thanksgiving day.

“And Dick, from down South, with his fine, pretty lady,—

I hope she won't scorn us, and our humble home.”

“And Florence,” said Grandma, “will come with her baby,

And Susan, with all the dear children, will come.

Well, well! they will find us here ready to meet them,—

We keep the nest warm when our birds are away,—

And in the dear home of their childhood we'll greet them

At least once a year, on the Thanksgiving day.

“The years seem so bright since you brought me here, Peter;

Your love made them peaceful and happy and long.”

“And, Mary,” said he, “*you* are dearer and sweeter

Than ever you were in the years that are gone.

We've come down the hill of life's journey together,

Through sunshine and shade, side by side all the way;

Your lover, who told you his love by the river,

Is your lover still on this Thanksgiving day.

“When our last one left us, dear heart, how we missed her!

But now they're all settled in homes of their own.

Our life work is finished,”—he bent over and kissed her,—

“In the empty home nest we are waiting alone.”

With his arm round her waist, her head on his shoulder,

His hand clasping hers in the old loving way,

They are roaming, once more, by the stream where he told her

His love long ago on a Thanksgiving day.

He is telling it over, the sweet, olden story!

Forgetting the years and the sorrows between;

The sunlight creeps in with a halo of glory,—

Creeps in through the window, unheeded, unseen.

There's a rumbling of wheels; there are glad, happy
voices;

Men, women, and children, in festive array

Crowd the flow'r-bordered walk — how each fond heart
rejoices

In this glad reunion on Thanksgiving day!

His hand clasping hers the aged couple are sitting,

The room has grown chill, for the fire has gone out;

The kitten is playing with grandmother's knitting,—

They heed not the children who gather about.

They heed not, they care not, for over the river

The dusky-winged angel hath borne them away!

Hand in hand, side by side, crossed over together,

Life crowned with eternity's Thanksgiving day.

UNDER THE CURFEW BELL

T'WARD the church the gray old sexton

Wandered slowly. His the hand

That should wake the sweet bell echoes

Of the "curfew" in the land.

Down the daisy-bordered pathway,

Like a gleam of sunshine bright,

Came a little fairy figure,

Golden-headed, clad in white;

Earnest browed, and face uplifted;

Dimpled hands that sought his own;

Rosy lips just touched with pathos

As they made their trouble known.

“ My dear mamma’s gone to Heaven.
Please, sir, where is Heaven, say?
I asked papa all about it,
But *he* doesn’t know the way;
And I wants to find my mamma
In the place where she has gone,
But I’m ’fraid I might get losted
If I went there all alone.
Mamma said papa *must* bring me
Safe to her in Heaven some day:
But he telled me, when I asked him,
That he didn’t know the way.”

“ Heaven is there.” He pointed upward,
And the fair child’s troubled eyes
Only saw the tall, old belfry,
Dark against the sunset skies.
Then he hastened to his duties,
Left the wee one standing there,
With the glory of the sunset
On her face and in her hair.
“ I *will find* mamma,” she murmured,
As she entered at the door;
Summer sunset paled behind her,
Gloomy shadows stretched before.

Up the stairway climbed the baby,
Upward to the belfry tower;
Saw the star eyes looking downward,
In the solemn twilight hour;
Saw the street lamps gleaming upward
Through the shadows, gray and dim;
Saw the blue sky all about her,
And the bell’s great, iron rim;

Stood alone 'twixt earth and Heaven,
Waiting for the angel hands,
That should bear her safe to mamma
Through the mystic border lands.

Suddenly the great tongue trembled,
And the fair child's startled eyes
Saw the black dome hanging o'er her
Sway against the dark'ning skies;
Then a *crash*, and ere the echoes
O'er the hills had ceased to ring,
Little Pearle was with her mother,
In the palace of the King.

THE FEAST OF CHERRIES

HARK! 'tis a sound of music,
Whence comes the joyful strain?
A thousand childish voices
Join in the glad refrain,
And swell the mighty chorus.
The tramp of children's feet,
With gladsome tread re-echo
Down Hamburg's busy street.

'Neath bending boughs of cherries,
With joyful shout and song,
The gayly dressed procession
Of children pass along.
For, once in dear old Hamburg
A direful day of woe
Was turned to gladness, over
Four hundred years ago.

The Hussites led by Nasus,
Pronounced the city's doom,
And over all the people
There fell a midnight gloom.
Alas! no hand could save them;
No strength of arm or steel.
Small hopes were there to soften
Stern hearts by their appeal.

They gathered up the children
All over Hamburg town.
The pretty bright hued dresses,
Of blue and red and brown,
They laid aside and dressed them
In black, from head to feet,
Then sent the sad procession
Down death-doomed Hamburg's street.

Before Procopius Nasus
The little mourners came,
And offered their petition,
With tears, in Hamburg's name.
He bade them cease their mourning;
He turned their grief to joy,
And laid a feast of cherries
Before each girl and boy.

Behold them! home returning,
With joyous shouts of glee,
Each crowned with leaves and cherries;
All crying: "Victory!"
No wonder that the children
Still hand the custom down,
And keep the "feast of cherries,"
In dear old Hamburg town.

SHORTER POEMS

COME read life's vibrant story
In the heart-throbs of the sea;
Come into the fragrant garden,
And gather its blooms with me.

LIFE

BREATH of the Infinite, filling all space,
(Marvelous mystery, wonder sublime —)
Broad as the universe, aged as Time;
Germ of all being, condition and place.

Rose-tints that live in the light of the sun;
Flowers that breathe out perfume on the breeze;
Warble of bird-throats, and rivers that run;
Wave throbs of oceans; wide spreading of trees;
Flutter and flash of innumerable wings —
All earth is thrilled with vibrations of life;
All space is filled with its throbbings and strife;
All time is pierced with its laughter and stings.
Breath from the lips of the Infinite face,
For all eternity breathed into space.

WHOM OTHERS ENVY

THROUGH years of patient toil and sacrifice
He climbed Fame's ladder, round by round,
Nor rested till his hand had grasped the prize
For which he toiled. Self-made, self-crowned,
He stood among his lofty dreams, and weighed
Their worth, together with the price he paid.

A millionaire!— he bartered love for this,—
 Love binds the wings of him who would arise.
 He rose unfettered. Now with famished eyes
 He gazes on another's Paradise.

While Memory taunts him with a shy, sweet kiss,
 A frightened, fluttering thing, the first, the last.
 No childish voices echo through his past:
 He wears his laurels, but he paid their price.

AFFLICTION'S NEED

YOU come to me with words of comfort— you
 Whose lips ne'er touched the rim of sorrow's cup;
 From whose glad heart the early morning dew
 The hot breath of despair hath not dried up.

You bid me bow beneath the chastening rod,
 Whose blight was never on your shoulders laid—
 You standing on the sunlight height of God;
 I crouching in woe's deepest, darkest shade.

Go, send me one whose bleeding feet have trod
 This narrow way, where Death walks either side;
 Balm falls not from the mighty hand of God,
 But from the touch of Jesus, crucified.

THE GERM OF LIFE

ONE dipped his pen in wisdom's lore,
 And wrote a treatise on "the skies,"
 A learned treatise deep and wise.
 Professors marveled at the store
 Of his great knowledge. All of earth
 Conceded mind's superior worth.

One dipped his pen in heart-dews wet,
And wrote a tender little sonnet,
So crude that criticism set
The blight of disapproval on it.
Death-doomed, it lives, its simple rhyme
Pulsating in the veins of Time.
Heart born, it stirs the hearts of men;
Love laden, charms both youth and age.
While Time lays rust on learning's pen,
And dust besprinkles wisdom's page.

IF WE KNEW

WE cannot know the weary pain,
Life's way may lead us through;
We cannot see the sunny plain
God's love will guide us to;
The burning, songless deserts,
Or the valleys sweet with dew.
How oft would tears of sorrow
Change to laughter, if we knew
The glorious and grand beyond
That waits us "down the way."
When from our chained and troubled lives
The mists have rolled away;
When through the tears that dim our eyes
We view the perfect day.

THE PERFECT TEST

SWEET are the flowers of springtime;
But the autumn blooms are best,
Fair are the buds but the ripened fruit
Is ever the perfect test.

Dear are the friends of childhood;
But dearer the friends of age.
One is a bubble of transient mood;
The other a printed page.

The love of youth is a passion;
The love of age is a crown,
By the hand of the great Love Master
On the human brow laid down.

HOW TO BE HAPPY

WHAT is the use of fretting
Over things that have gone wrong?
Just cultivate forgetting,
And tune your heart to song.

Keep the blooms, destroy the thistles.
You don't want their stings about.
All that troubles and annoys you,
You can better live without.

There is glory in the setting
Of the sun that follows rain;
There is science in forgetting;
If you just forget the pain.

Yours the pow'r to rise triumphant
O'er resentment's somber mood;
To surround your life with blessings,
By remembering the good.

MOTHER OF MINE

THE years are long since I sat at your knee
In the far-away olden time,
Your voice dropping love in the heart of me,
Blessed mother of mine.

My sins and mistakes you have blotted out,
With a love that was all divine;
No other love has forgiven so much,
Blessed mother of mine.

Dear eyes that saw only the good in me;
Dear heart that approved of mine,
What can I bring as a tribute to thee?
Blessed mother of mine.

FORGETTING

WE stand with our faces earthward
And watch for the shadows to fall,
Forgetting that high in the heavens
The sunlight is shining for all;
Forgetting that pleasure and laughter
Are ours to claim as a right;
Forgetting that morning comes after
The gloom and the shadow of night.

We stand 'midst our broken idols,
And weep with a childlike grief,
Forgetting that time will bring us
The balm of a sure relief;
Forgetting that forth from our sorrows
Spring many a hopeful ray;
Forgetting that golden to-morrows
Are born from the tears of to-day.

EASTER BELLS

RING, ye joyous Easter bells!
 Stir the heart! awake the nation!
 Thrill the world with glad pulsation!
 Christ, who brought us free salvation;
 Christ, the Saviour for us born —
 From the grave rose Easter morn.

Ring triumphant, Easter bells!
 Joy for sad hearts reunited!
 Joy for wrongs that have been righted!
 Joy for noble lives indited
 On Time's page by History's pen,
 Lives of nations and of men.

Ring, O happy Easter bells —
 Ring the birth of spring-time vernal!
 Ring the birth of souls eternal!
 Ring the endless love supernal!
 Ring the dawn of better days,
 Hearts of truth and songs of praise!

LIFE'S PEACEFUL TWILIGHT

ALITTLE brown cot on the hillside;
 A white village low at its feet:
 From odorous fields, wafted over
 The hill, comes the fragrance of clover,
 When summer is rosy and sweet.

And up from the beach comes the echo
 Of wrathful old Michigan's roar,
 When the depths of his treacherous water
 Are stirred for wreck, ruin and slaughter,
 And he shakes his mane on the shore.

And up from the town comes a murmur,
Faint and far, of life's busy din.
Only this of its tumult and scurry,
Of its feverish thirst and its hurry,
Its grasping for gold, and its sin.

And methinks that even the echoes
Tune softer before they arise
To the cottage where father and mother
Spend their autumn of life with each other,
Just under the beautiful skies.

THE TWO KINGS

IN the middle hour, 'twixt the dark and the dawn,
An old king dies,
And only the wind that sweeps the lawn
A requiem sighs.
He has tasted sorrow, has felt disgrace,
Has known all pleasure, has filled all space,
Has ruled the world with indulgent hand
While passion or principle crazed it, and
Now he is gone.

'Twixt the dark and the dawn, in the middle hour,
A king is born.
All nations kneel to the frost-white flower
That greets the morn.
They vow allegiance, and pardon and prayer
Like incense rise on the morning air.
For good or ill shall his name be known?
This infant king on the dead king's throne,
This new-born power!

As a meteor flashes across the blue,
 The past is past.
From the dust of death life springs anew.
 My faith holds fast
To the creed of eternal love and truth.
I claim for all time perpetual youth;
That the germ of good will cast out sin;
That the angel God planted our hearts within
 Will keep us true.

HIS SECOND COMING

AT night on the hills of Judea,
 The shepherds were watching the sky,
Where fleecy clouds gathered and drifted,
With awe on their faces uplifted,
 As th' dawn of God's promise drew nigh.

They knew not the mode of His coming,
 But thought of the purple and gold
Of their king in magnificent splendor,
And their voices grew solemn and tender
 With hope of the blessing foretold.

Again we are waiting His coming,
 Reaching up to His standard of worth,
The angel within is expanding,
And brotherhood's right is demanding
 That evil be banished from earth.

Again woman heralds His coming:
 Her clear voice is heard in the van,
Proclaiming the dawn, when all nations
Shall echo the Great Heart's pulsations,
 And God be reflected in man.

She guards the Christ-love in her keeping;
By *her* are the Christmas chimes rung;
She rekindles the Yule-fire's glory,
And all the world over, the story
Is written and spoken and sung.

And all the world over, the people
Are spreading the blessing abroad,
Are cleansing the depths of the fountain,
Are climbing the heights of the mountain,—
Are waiting the coming of God!

WRECKED

TWO ships sailed out past the harbor bar
One beautiful autumn day.
More precious than all earth's jewels are
Was the freight they bore away.

There were fond farewells, and anxious sighs,
And meeting of loving lips;
There were earnest prayers, as from longing eyes
Sailed the two love-freighted ships.

The sky was clear, and the sun shone bright,
When they left the harbor town;
But th' storm-king rode on the deep that night,
And one of the ships went down.

Two human ships set their sail one day,
On a calm and sunlit sea;
From the port of home they sailed away;
One was lost in th' deep. Ah, me!

There were hidden reefs of crime and sin,
 Over which his life was tossed;
 There were unseen tides to draw him in,
 He fell, and his soul was lost!

When ships go down in the trackless deep,
 We weep, and the church-bells toll;
 But Heaven mourns and the angels weep,
 When is wrecked the human soul.

WHO CAN TELL?

OH! perfect bud with dewy breast,
 Half hidden in an emerald vest.
 Will time, and sun, and gentle shower,
 Bring forth from thee a perfect flower?
 Will no rude fingers cast thee down?
 No blight within thy heart be found?
 Sweet bud, thy future seemeth well;
 But who can tell, ah! who can tell?

Oh! little child, so pure, so fair,
 From rosy foot to sunny hair;
 Through life's temptation and its sin,
 Wilt thou remain as pure within?
 Nor death destroy the tender vine?
 Nor crime e'er blight God's work divine?
 Sweet child, thy future seemeth well,
 But who can tell, ah! who can tell?

NOTHING LOST

ATINY seed of little worth,
 Brought by the strong west wind
 From distant parts, fell to the earth
 Where grew none of its kind.

A thousand years with fleeting tread
Swept o'er the fair green earth—
Where is the seed? Forgotten? Dead?
Who says 'twas little worth?
A forest, grand, majestic, stands
Where that small seed was tost,
For in Time's wide, gigantic hands,
No single thing is lost.

No human life ere dawned on earth
But left its impress here
For weal or woe. Still lives its worth
In hearts that held it dear.
A thought which trembling lips impart;
A song, perchance a rhyme,
May thrill the world's great, pulsing heart
Throughout all future time.
Though none may know whence came the thought,
Or what the singer's name,
Still, since a grand result is wrought,
That life was not in vain.

THE TEST OF AGE

'TIS but a day
Since here *I* lay
My first-born babe beside me,
All coming time seemed wondrous bright,
With love's dear hand to guide me.

No line of care
On brow or hair
Had stolen girlhood's glory;
The years, all bathed in rainbow dew,
Enchanted, spread before me.

Those golden years,
Embalmed with tears,
Fled like the night wind sighing.
To-day upon my older breast,
My baby's babe is lying.

I know not where
This silver hair
Has found its threads of sorrow;
The sunlight here, the shadow there —
Made up my past's to-morrow.

With noiseless tread
The roses fled.
But I cannot remember
Just when the summer's golden bloom
Was merged in gray November.

Youth's day has passed —
I wake at last,
And view my face with wonder.
A baby's dimpled hand hath torn
Delusion's veil assunder.

THE BELLS OF LIFE

THE birth bells are ringing a joyous chime
For a white soul laid in the arms of love —
A spirit flower from the fields above,
To bloom for a day on the shores of time.

The wedding bells swing to their gladdest notes,
Proclaiming the good that the full years bring
In the circling band of the marriage ring,
From the brazen depths of their giant throats.

In the belfry of time the death bells toll
The entrance to Heaven, the end of earth,
The death that is only a grander birth,
As life's bondage falls from the passing soul.

Birth bells, marriage bells, death bells, you have rung
The story of life since the world was young.

SONG OF THE THANKFUL TIME

WE think of Thanksgiving as seeding time —
In the swelling, unfolding, budding time,
When the heart of Nature, and hearts of men
Rejoice in the Earth grown young again.
We dream of the harvest of field and vine,
And granaries full at Thanksgiving time.

We think of Thanksgiving in growing time —
In the time of flowers, and the vintage prime;
When the palms of the Year's strong hands are filled
With fruitage, with grain, and with sweets distilled.
When the dream of hope is a truth sublime,
Then our hearts make room for the thankful time.

We think of Thanksgiving in harvest time —
In the yielding, gathering, golden time;
When the sky is fringed with a hazy mist.
And the blushing maples by frost-lips kissed.
When the barns are full with the harvest cheer,
And the crowning, thankful day draws near.

We think of Thanksgiving as resting time —
The circle completed is but a chime
In the song of life, in the lives of men!
We harvest the toil of our years, and then
We wait at the gate of the King's highway,
For the dawn of our soul's Thanksgiving day.

THE BIRDS' THANKSGIVING

O H! list to the chime,
The exquisite rhyme,
The warble of birds in the glad spring-time.

'Neath each feathered coat;
From each throbbing throat,
The praise to Jehovah swells, note upon note.

The storm king at last,
Has died in the blast,
And the long, dark night of the year is past.

While the morning brings,
On its dewy wings,
Sweet buds and the promise of better things.

Lo! the forest rings;
Not a bird but sings
Thanksgiving and praise to the King of Kings.

When the sun shines bright,
They bask in its light,
Forgetting the shadow and gloom of night.

Only man, holds fast,
With miserly grasp,
To the storms and wrongs of the moments past.

He keepeth the smart,
Deep down in his heart,
Rejecting God's love and the better part.

While His praise *we* sing,
We think of the sting —
How God hath denied us some valued thing.

We cherish the wrong
In our hearts so long,
It saddens our lives and burdens our song.

Then sing, birds of spring!
Praise, warble and sing,
Till the woods, the hills and the vales shall
ring.

Till we catch the strain,
And a glad refrain,
Goes forth to our Maker, unshared with pain.

DRIFTING AWAY

ONE by one they are drifting away,
Over the breast of the silent sea,
Into the shadow-land, dim and gray,
They're drifting, drifting away from me;
And dark and dense are the mists that rise
Between my lost and my longing eyes.

How oft' I've stood on that lonely shore;
The shore that borders the silent sea.
And heard the dip of the boatmans' oar
Bearing some dear one away from me;
Out in the darkness so dense and deep,
I could only trust, and wait, and weep.

And yet when the boatman turneth back,
Bearing my dear ones away from me,
Ever he leaveth a shining track
To mark the place where they crossed the sea;

A thought of the loving Heart divine,
Left in the darkness to comfort mine.

Hope sweeps away the clouds of despair;
Faith whispers softly "These lost of thine
Are safe." Through the gloomy shadows there
They drift into stronger arms than mine.
I know that the guiding Power is just;
All *I* can do is to wait and trust.

OCTOBER

FAIR buds of promise have yielded their treasure,
Autumn has crowned all the bountiful year,
Filling with plenty the o'erflowing measure,
Glad'ning our hearts with its fruit and its cheer;
Beautiful, golden October is here.

Nature may wear garments gorgeous or sober;
Snow-drifts or blossoms may cover the earth;
Spring's dainty buds, or the leaves of October,
Still we *may* gather sweet garlands of worth
From even the gloom of earth's desolate dearth.

HOW THE FLOWERS CAME

'TWAS seed time in Heaven, the angel whose care
Is for Eden's blossoms; that angel more fair
Than all her fair sisters, twin spirits of air,
That angel whose footsteps wherever they tread,
Spring up into blossoms, blue, yellow and red;
That angel whose teardrops, wherever they fall,
Give birth to white lilies, the fairest of all;

That angel whose breath is the perfume of flowers,
Had spent all the jewel-gemmed, paradise hours
Of the roseate morn where beauties unfold
In calyx of crimson and purple and gold.

Beside the great portals she paused and looked through,
Down, down the vast distance, of star-lighted blue,
Beheld the gray rocks without beauty or bloom,
And sighed for earth's children away in the gloom.

“No beauty or bloom hath the children of woe;
No brightness; no sweetness, my hand will bestow
One Heaven-born seed for their gardens below.”
She said as she loosened her girdle to find
One seed which was fairest, and best of its kind.
Her eager hand trembled, the girdle slipped through
Her rosy-tipped fingers, and down through the blue,
Down, down the vast distance, her golden seeds flew.

Some caught in the crevice of rocks, others fell
In lone desert places, by way-side and dell;
On hills and in valleys; in forest and glen,
To gladden and brighten the journeys of men.

At th' portals of Heaven, with sorrowful face,
The little flow'r angel looks out into space,
In search of her treasures. Her tears as they fall,
Find all her lost seedlings, and water them all.

A BETTER TOY

T WAS Christmas morn. Our baby boy
With conscious pride displayed his toy —
A painted bugle. “See, oh, see!
What my good Santa Claus brought me;
I's full of glad as I can be.”

Scarce had the happy words been said
 When he beheld his brother's sled.
 "Did Santa Claus bring that to you!—
 A pretty sled all painted blue?
 He's mean as he can be. Boo-hoo!"

He flung his bugle on the floor,
 He stamped his feet, he raised a roar.
 Woe's pall encompassed our wee boy;
 Life held for him no more of joy
 Since Bertie owned a better toy.

The Lord drops blessings in our way,
 Some little good for ev'ry day;
 We count them o'er in happy mood,
 With thankful hearts, just as we should,
 And call the royal Giver good.

Soon we behold, like that wee boy,
 Our brother has a better toy,
 Then turned to gall is life's rich wine,
 With moody envy we repine,
 And scorn all lesser gifts divine.

GOD'S WAY IS BEST

PAST the portals of to-day,
 Something waits us down the way;
 Joys, perhaps, for you and me,
 Some fond dream to realize,
 Waits for us, a glad surprise;
 We may guess but cannot see.

Just beyond the misty screen
 Of the vail Time drops between,
 Something waits us, joy or woe,

Throbs of heartache, thrills of bliss,
Echoes of a parting kiss,
Life or death. We do not know.

Wait, thou shrouded mystery!
It is well we cannot see;
It is well we do not know.
Life and love are ours to-day.
God, in mercy, hides the way
We must tread in joy or woe.

THANKSGIVING

WE bring our heart's best offering,
As earth grows brown and sere,
To lay before the mighty King,
Who rules the rolling year.

The winter months brought no alarms;
Spring came with gladsome feet;
And summer yielded all her charms,
To crown the year complete.

No sound of pestilential tread;
No common cause of fear;
No war; no voice of panic dread
Throughout the fleeting year.

Oh, passing year! Oh, golden year!
May this we soon shall greet,
Be just as rich in loving cheer,
As perfect and complete.

WHERE IS HEAVEN?

“WHAT is Heaven?”

“Child, how can I tell
Of the beauty that rests on the ‘City of God?’
My eyes have not seen it, my feet have not trod
Its golden paved streets set with jewels whose worth
Outshine and outvalue the jewels of earth.
And what is Heaven? I know only this:
'Tis the birthplace of glory; the essence of bliss.”

“Where is Heaven?”

“Dear, how do I know?
We gaze into space through the blue, throbbing air,
Sun-crowned and star-gemmed, and we say, ‘It is
there.’
Above and beyond us, more high, and more high,
God’s palace, whose floor is our beautiful sky.
And where is Heaven? I know only this:
'Tis the hope of all ages, wherever it is.”

TWO DAYS

YESTERDAY

The trees stood nude against the sky,
Snow-bound lay field and meadow,
The flowers slept; the hills were bare;
The sunshine smiled some other where,
For Winter walks in shadow.

To-day

The green reeds bending o’er the brook
Form cosy bowers for Undine,
The flow’rs awake, and ev’rywhere
Warm glints of glory fill the air,
For Spring calls back the sunshine.

WOMAN'S LIFE

A FAIRY tale that is newly told,
Meadows hugging the rivers rim;
Meadows with blossoms manifold,
Cares and pain in the distance dim,
And skies that are gold.

An old romance that is sweet and new,
Draughts of pleasure and heart in tune,
Passionate friendships fond and true
Blossoms and songsters; month of June,
And skies that are blue.

A book that's finished and laid away,
Withered flow'rs on a broken stem,
Twilight kissing the lids of day,
A time of peace; life's calm amen,
And skies that are gray.

A TIME OF PEACE

AN aged one watches th' glow in the west,
And smiles. Her passion of living is past,
She sits in the twilight of life at last,
Her labors completed; her heart at rest.

Awaiting the hour of her soul's release;
Her soul burned white in the furnace of pain,
She beholds life's day on the hillsides wane,
And the dawn of an endless day increase.

LOVE TRIUMPHS

THE sun shines over the storm;
 The rose sleeps under the snow;
 The cold and the tempest are working harm
 In the year's long night of woe.

The sun is true to the rose;
 The rose is true to the sun.
 He will pierce the depths of the winter snows,
 And wed her when spring has come.

The bitter north wind may blow;
 It can never bring them harm;
 For the rose is trusting under the snow,
 And th' sun rides over the storm.

THE SWEETEST FLOWER

'TIS not the bud, though wondrous fair,
 Nor yet the full-blown, regal rose;
 But that rare charm, half seen, half guessed,
 Unfolding from her spicy breast
 A subtile fragrance on the air;
 A pink flush where her sweets repose,
 And slow unveil in modest bliss,
 Wooed by the sun's warm, loving kiss.

'Tis not the child, though dimpled fair,
 Nor yet the woman's thoughtful face
 That wins most hearts. 'Tis that dear flush
 On girlhood's cheek like sunset's blush.
 The bloom of heaven that lingers there,
 And crowns her with angelic grace.
 Her clear, pure eyes behold afar
 The glory of Hope's gate ajar.

God grant this perfect opening flower,
May blossom full without a blight;
May wear her crown of womanhood
As something noble, grand and good;
May spend her strength in righteous power,
With heart-strings ever tuned aright.
Then shall God's presence, like a dove,
O'ershadow her with wings of love.

AN OPEN SECRET

LAUGH, my young daughters, and keep your hearts
gay —

The secret of happiness lies
In holding the sunshine and driving away
The shadows that sometimes arise.
Remember this truth in your childhood years —
That laughter is better than tears.

This to you, maidens—'tis sunshine that wins.
The light of a true loving heart —
Shining out through eyes that doubt never dims —
Is the secret of beauty's art.
'Tis also the secret of love, my dears,
For smiles are more potent than tears.

Better than beauty that fades from the face,
This elixir of wondrous art;
It glorifies age with magical grace,
And warms the deep fount of the heart.
No charm so able to hold and to win
As love-light that shines from within.

DEEDS ARE THOUGHTS

DON'T think it, my dear. Do not open
 Your heart's sacred chalice to sin;
 Don't unbar the portal, vain hoping
 That only the thought will creep in.
 Deeds are thoughts given voice. From th' center
 Of action they leap past control;
 Let only white messengers enter;
 Stand guard at the door of your soul.

A NOBLE WARRIOR

NOBLE is he whose moral strength
 Beats down the walls of wrong;
 Whose white-souled manhood teaches man
 A purer, grander song;
 Who flings truth's stately portals wide
 That others may come in.
 Most noble he of conquerers
 Who conquers self and sin.

THOUGHTS

THE heart is a garden, and never a seed
 Dropped into its fertile mold,
 But grows and grows, be it thistle or rose;
 Weed or blossom, its leaves unfold.
 Our thoughts are the seeds that grow to be
 The plants that shall live through eternity.

A MOTHER'S WISH

LITTLE daughter, fair and sweet,
Neither child nor woman,
Like a lily, tall and slender;
Like a snow-drop, pure and tender;
Like a daisy; like a rose;
Like the dearest flow'r that grows,
Pure and fair and human.

May life's journey ever lead
Into peaceful valleys,
Where the brooklet ripples over
Pebbled beds, past fields of clover,
Singing birds and humming bees,
Meadows green, and leafy trees,
Where the sunlight dallies.

Let thy brothers climb the heights
Mad with life's ambition;
Let them run the race before thee,
Keep thy charm of woman's glory
All unsullied, pure as now.
May life crown thy woman's brow
With its best fruition.

AMONG HER FLOWERS

I SEE a window hedged about
With growing greenness flecked with bloom;
A summer window in the room,
While Winter holds his court without.
Begonia disks like shells, pink-tipped;

Some taller plants in browns and reds;
 Bright fuchsia bells with drooping heads;
 Budding geraniums, scarlet-lipped,
 And hovering about the place
 My mother's face.

A waxen calla lily tall
 Her hands caress with tender touch;
 A bit of smilax—'t isn't much,
 But her fond eyes they compass all
 With loving glance, and her dear face
 Is flushed with summer's beauty, though
 Life's winter crowns her with its snow.
 Oh! stately flow'r of regal grace,
 No blossom in your window there
 Is half as fair.

KEEP THE HEART YOUNG

LAUGH, for the world is your cradle;
 Little one, laugh and play.
 The dome of your skies is mother's sweet eyes
 And life is the month of May.

Play, for the world is your playground,
 Flow'rs and birds are in tune,
 Love waits to greet you; fame runs to meet you,
 For life is the month of June.

Work, for the world is your work-shop;
 Keep step to the hopeful tune
 Through th' heat of the day, and never once stray
 Beyond the meadows of June.

EASTER LINES

AWAKEN, sweet flowers!
The snow in the valley has melted at last,
And the desolate night of the year is past;
The ice-chains are broken; the robins are singing,
Awake to the call of the Easter bells ringing.

Awaken, oh, heart!
In bondage of sin thou hast slumbered so long;
Arise in the gladness and rapture of song;
Arise in the beauty of nature's adorning;
Come forth in thy strength on this glad Easter morn-
ing.

THE GREATEST GOOD

THE sun beholds no shadow, for his rays
Dispel the darkness. Where-so-ere he turns
The glory of his own reflection burns;
Night flees before the splendor of his gaze.

He smiles, and ev'ry gloomy shade smiles back!
His warmth, far reaching, touches hidden springs
Of dormant good, and all earth's sleeping things
Expand and blossom in his shining track.

With lance of light he pierces forest glooms;
His kisses speed the snow-bound blossoms birth.
So love, God's gift to man of priceless worth,
Touches the heart, and it expands and blooms.

WHO KNOWS?

WHO knows — who can tell where the summer goes?

With dew-drenched garments and sweet-scented hair.

Where is the life that went out of the rose?

The music, the sunlight, the laughter — where?

Who knows?

What knowledge reveals where the freed soul goes?

When released from its prison-house of pain.

To the realm of light or the place of woes;

To the golden heights or the shadowed plain,

Who knows?

At the voice of knowledge all gates unclose

Except the portals of life and of death.

It were vain to ask where the spirit goes.

The secret of giving and hushing breath

God knows.

THE BETROTHAL

THE stars peeped forth with laughing eyes;

The happy moon looked down

From Night's great jeweled crown;

The breezes whispered to the trees;

The river told it to the seas;

The sea reached up and kissed the skies;

All Nature thrilled with glad surprise.

For once within this life of ours

We pass through Eden's perfumed bowers.

The children of a banished race

Stand once within that holy place,

And sip its nectar, cull its flowers.

Hath even Paradise a bliss
More dear than love's betrothal kiss?

LILIES OF FAITH

WE stood in youth's fragrant meadows
Where the tall faith lilies grow.
The sunny slopes of the hillside
With pink trust blooms were aglow,
And down in the mossy hollows,
Hope fluttered its plumes of snow.

Our hearts were drunken with gladness,
In time with the katey-did's tune;
The flowers made love; the bold cowslip
Touched lips with the clover bloom;
The heart of the rose unfolded,
'Neath the laughing eyes of June.

The future swung out before us,
All golden from rim to rim,
And the pink trust blooms went marching
With the lilies tall and prim,
While over them all Love beckoned,
And gladly we followed him.

'Tis twenty years and it seemeth
But a golden summer's day,
For Love has laughed at the shadows,
And danced on the sunbeams gay.
And the lilies of faith were with us,
And the trust blooms, all the way.

HER FIRST LONG DRESS

I LOST my beautiful baby
In the dim years long ago,
But the days and the months that stole her
Crept by with footsteps slow.
They snatched from her cheek a dimple,
And into her laughing eyes
They sent the grave, sweet wonder
Of the knowledge that maketh wise.
And her golden head grew higher
And darker. I know full well,
Some time in the past I lost her,
But the hour I can not tell.

I have lost my little daughter
In one tiny moment's space.
She is just the same in statue;
Just the same dear, rosy face;
Just the darling that I folded
In my arms and to my heart,
But a skillful needle stole her
With the pow'r of fashion's art.

TOURISTS

THEY stood by the west sea while sunset
Made ready its winter surprise.
"Was there ever such blue?" she murmured,
"Such wonderful blue, as these skies?"
"Such blue," he replied. "No, never,
'Tis the gateway to Paradise,
Through radiant blue, to the heart of you."
And he smiled in her lifted eyes.

“ Oh, the charm of the southwest winter !
There is naught on earth to compare
With this cloth of gold on the sea unrolled ;
This dust of gold in the air.”
“ The gold,” and his voice grew tender,
“ There is no such gold, I swear ;
Such marvelous gold, on my heart unrolled.”
And he touched his lips to her hair.

“ See yon crimson path leading upward
To the portal of heaven I wis.
Was ever a red so rare ?” she said,
“ Was ever a red like this ?”
“ Oh, red of the heart’s deep fountain !
Oh, rapturous altar of bliss !
There is no such red in the world,” he said,
As he laid on her lips a kiss.

LOVE’S AVOWAL

DEAR heart of my heart, throbbing close to my
breast

With fondest and truest pulsation,
List while I repeat the old story, my sweet,
In the language of love’s adoration !

Oh, life of my life, all the purest and best
Of my manhood warms in thy presence,
No unworthy part of my life or my heart
Can share in the sweet of love’s essence.

Pure soul of my soul, is there aught in my past
I would blush for your eyes to discover ?
You have reared my throne, with your fair hands, my
own,
You have crowned me your king, your true lover.

Oh, pure heart and true, all my future for you
 Shall read clear as the spring's crystal water,
 Thou lily-white dove, in the arms of my love
 I will shield you, my fair little daughter.

THE SWEET OLD STORY

AMONG the shadows golden
 Reflected from the sea,
 He told the story olden,
 But it was new to *me*.
 So wonderous sweet the story
 I stood with down-cast eyes,
 While earth seemed filled with glory;
 Twin light of Paradise.

The story may be olden,
 It never can be old,
 No more than cowslips golden
 Can change to coins of gold.
 For lovers are but mortals,
 And maids with down-cast eyes
Will enter at the portals
 Of earth's fair Paradise.

ASSURANCE

HERE'S a grain of comfort, dearest,
 When your hopes in ruin lie;
 When the black storm cloud is nearest
 It will soonest pass you by.

Foam that brims the cup of pleasure
 Vanishes like froth of wine,
 But the best is in the measure
 Free from dross and genuine.

Take this grain of comfort, dearest,
When your heart is tempest-tost.
Trouble's wave brings true worth nearest;
God's great truth is never lost.

NEPENTHE

AS little ones just loosed from mother's arm,
Bruised by the fall their falt'ring footsteps make,
Return that she may kiss away the harm,
And gently cure the ache.

So we, escaping from God's mighty hand
Stumble and fall where snares of sin have lain,
And God's great love by His great mercy fanned
Forgives, and heals the pain.

LINNET

LINNET, Linnet, wait a minute,
Tell your tale of rapture;
How the glory and the glow
Of life's happy overflow
Thou hast learned to capture.

Sing it, sing it, little Linnet;
Fill me with the glory
Of the universal good;
Love and faith and brotherhood;
The redemption story.

A CITY CANON

NARROW, dim and deep it is;
 Heart of the metropolis.
 Parallel its walls arise
 Many storied to the skies.
 Through its veins with ceaseless din
 Human tides flow out and in.
 All of life is mirrored here,
 Passion's fever, cringing fear,
 Love and hate, a jostling throng
 Sweeps the cañon's length along,
 Poverty and avarice,
 Heart of the metropolis.

A TOAST

HERE'S to the days that slipped into the past
 From the rosary of time,
 And we'll drink to the days that are crowding fast
 With music of hopeful chime.
 Farewell to yesterday's pleasures and stings,
 Welcome to-morrow whatever it brings.

BEAUTY

"Beauty is its own excuse for being."

Emerson.

THE dear wild flowers that bloom apace,
 In nature's sweet disorder;
 That lift the beauty of each face
 To cheer life's rugged border.

The sun's good-night, in rain-bow lights
The western sky adorning;
The glory of the dawn that writes
Across the east "good-morning."

The beauty on a thousand hills
That Nature's charm discloses;
Her emerald meadows, singing rills;
The marvel of her roses;

Mountains that lift their rugged brows,
And worship God Eternal;
The human face that love endows
With grace almost supernal—

Whatever is God's love hath wrought
With purpose grand, far-seeing,
And beauty is—oh, happy thought—
"Its own excuse for being."

TRUTH IN FICTION

AN author writes. As the pages glide
From under his busy pen,
His brain creations become his pride,
Endowed with love's passion; then
He draws the veil from their hearts aside,
Reveals to the gaze of men
The aching and throbbing,
The moaning and sobbing,
The agonized waiting when hope is deferred,
And smiles as the story grows, word upon word.

He leads them on to their destiny;
He knows that the coming bliss
Of the perfect "final" yet to be,
Grows out of despair like this;

That present pain and its misery
Add sweet to the waiting kiss;
That in life, or story,
The summit of glory,—
Those highlands which bask in Love's triumphant
reign,—
Are reached through the lowlands and meadows of
pain.

WOMAN

A QUEEN in her beautiful garments,
She stands on the ramparts to-day
To herald the dawn, and the cerements
Of self have been folded away.

She stands with the prophets and sages;
She speaks, and her tongue is a flame
Leaping forth from fires which for ages
Have slumbered in silence and shame.

Her feet have come up from the valleys,
They are climbing the mountains of light,
At her call th' world rouses and rallies;
Bearing arms in the battle of right.

She treads on the serpent that stung her,
And grinds out its life 'neath her heel;
She grapples with sorrows that wrung her,
Converting her woe into weal.

Made strong through her slaughtered affections
She comes, with her sons by her side,
An angel of pow'r and protection,
Their beacon-light, leader and guide.

No longer a timorous being,
To cringe and to cry 'neath the rod;
But quick to divine and far-seeing,
She hastens the purpose of God.

LABOR VERSUS CAPITAL

SIX merry cobblers all day long,
Worked at their trade with jest and song.
They all received the same small pay,
And five spent theirs on Saturday.

Just how, or where we do not know;
For better dress, for greater show,
For rum and beer and, well — perchance —
Amusements that are viewed askance.

They jeered their friend who, well content,
Received more dollars than he spent.
They called him miserly, and more
Derided the patched clothes he wore.

The years sped on with swifter tread,
And now a dozen more have fled.
Five grumbling cobblers all day long
Work at their trade and nurse their wrong.

Their old companion owns the store,
A home, a pretty wife — still more —
He rides in comfort while they walk,
And plan, and scowl, and talk and talk.

In accents dire these jealous men
Declare that *he* should share with *them*.
What right has Capital to hold
From Labor's grasp its treasured gold?

NO PERFECT WORK BUT GOD'S

“**I** WILL build,” said the architect, “mansions more
fair,
Marble columned, and stately and grand,
Mammoth domed, perfection base, turret and stair,
And the winds the fame of the builder shall bear
To the uttermost parts of the land.”

“I will paint,” said the artist, “a picture sublime,
Rainbow tinted with shades that are quaint;
The world shall bow down to this picture of mine,
For I'll dip my brush in the colors of time,
And the lights of eternity paint.”

“I will write,” said the poet, “a beautiful song
In the glory and strength of my might.
I will liberate truth. The shackles of wrong
Shall be broken, and sin, red-handed and strong
Shall be slain by the words I shall write.”

'Neath the broad dome of heaven's encircling blue,
Sculptured columns reared stately and vast,
And the architect smiled as the palace grew,
But the finger of Time pierced those columns through,
While the mountains, God's buildings, stood fast.

The picture lacked something which glowed on the
breast
Of the sea when the sunset unrolled,
The best of the poem was never expressed,
Man's grandest achievement is dross at the best,
Compared with God's labor of gold.

TRUTH

TALL and fair, a stately presence
Truth, the white-souled, leadeth on,
Saint and sinner follow after
Up the golden hills of dawn;
Prejudice with all its vices
Marks the path their feet have trod;
Wrongs like fleeting phantoms, vanish
In the clear search-light of God.

PROGRESS

THROUGH labyrinths of error and of wrong
Comes gentle Progress, calm and patient-eyed;
With tireless feet, with purpose brave and strong;
Slow plodding upward to the light and song
The crown the cross where self is crucified.

Her steps are glorified along the way
By those who aided in her work divine.
Martyr, reformer, poet, artist they!
He who hath builded nobly in his day
Is mighty conqueror of self and time.

Whenever Progress planned some grand advance,
A mind gigantic answered to her call,
And came to do her will with book or lance,
Inspired and strengthened by her hopeful glance,
On battle field or in the senate hall.

In ancient times she needed strength of arm;
Courage and brawn to battle for her sake.
Man traversed seas of gore to conquer harm;
Woman was weak and quick to take alarm,
For life was hers to give but not to take.

Now is the time when gentleness joins hands
 With strength, and woman hastens to the van;
 No longer cringing 'neath the iron bands
 Of fate, but with a lofty purpose stands
 Co-worker and co-warrior with man.

She may not wield the sword, but she may hold
 The public heart, and sing the sweeter song
 That conquers, not by strength, but pow'r to fold
 And chain desire within its heart of gold,—
 Thus breaking down the citadel of wrong.

For smiles more potent are than despot creed.
 And bands of love more strong than chains of steel
 Force cannot drive that which a child may lead;
 In woman's heart is born the world's great need,
 And she the mighty secret will reveal.

DREAMS

I SEE her sometimes in my dream,
 Her brown hair flowing free,
 A slender girl with eager face,
 The girl *I* used to be.
 She stands beside a shady stream
 And dreams with troubled brow,
 Her thought outreaching years to greet
 The woman I am now.
 She reared her castles, beam on beam,
 Built better than she knew,
 For in time's circle one by one
 Her best dreams all came true.

WHY?

THE joy-bells are ringing;
The song birds are singing;
The roses are bringing
Exquisite perfume.
Life gives what we seek for,
Why ever make room
For heartache and crosses,
For trouble and losses,
When we may choose rather
Its songsters and bloom.

RIO GRANDE

At Painted Cave, Texas

G RIM, rugged and steep are thy banks,
Rio Grande,
Their sculptured walls 'rise
Rock-ribbed 'neath the skies,
Without verdure or bloom,
Like some gigantic tomb,
Carved, fashioned, and set in this desolate land.

Thy waters are somber and gray
Rio Grande,
Reflecting the frown
Of rocks, looking down,
And a calm sky as gray,
And as solemn as they,
No beauty in all this wide desolate land.

Remember'st the time, ages past,
Rio Grande?
When volcanic swells
Cast these fossil shells
From their bed 'neath the wave.
Were the walls of this cave
Painted thus, by a real or invisible hand?

Beyond this drear waste is a sea,
Rio Grande,
All dimpling it lies,
'Neath the bluest of skies.
Thou shalt find it at last,
When the desert is past,
The bright summer sea, with its flow'r gemmed
strand.

E'en thus is the life that we live,
Rio Grande,
Rock, desert, and plain,
Care, worry and pain,
But when our glad eyes
Behold Heaven's surprise,
Our hearts will forget all this desolate land.

THE LAST NIGHT

San Antonio, Texas, March 6th, 1836

THEY stand in the shadow which darkly falls
When the Day-god sleeps in his glory,
Shut in by the gloom of these Alamo walls,
Those heroes who live in Fame's story.

Hunters and planters and miners are they,
Giant-builded and iron-hearted,
Unconquered, undaunted, they stand at bay
When their last faint hope has departed.

They are stern of visage and dark of brow,
With the mist in their eyes grown tender,
For memory "troubles the waters" now
In the heart of each brave defender.

There are dear wife hands reaching out to them,
There are sweet childish voices calling;
Love pierces the hearts of these stalwart men
As they stand in the night-shades falling.

With bare, bowed heads in the hush and the gloom
'Mid their sad regrets and their sorrow,
They wait for the flush of the "day of doom,"
To crimson these walls on the morrow.

Without are curses that burden the night,
Where the enemy fumes and rages,
Within they are kindling fires to light
Texas homes through all coming ages.

O, thou blood-bought shrine of a nation's pride!
Thou altar of love and of glory!
Thou Alamo! swept by a crimson tide,
Live ever in song and in story!

CALIFORNIA

THE world pays tribute to thy magic charm,
Thou sun-crowned queen beside the western sea,
And lays its treasures in thy outstretched arm.
In time of peace, in time of war's alarm,
A Nation looks to thee.

Thy strength is in thy freedom. Free from creed
 That binds the pow'rs and blinds the soul of man,
 Reaching kind hands to human hearts that bleed,
 Quick to perceive and meet another's need;
 To execute and plan.

Thine are the wilds no man hath ever trod;
 Thine are the vales of plenty, thine the sea,
 Standing erect beneath the chastening rod,
 And reaching upward through the mists to God.
 The world hath need of thee.

SAN DIEGO *

LOW swaying pepper boughs; blooms of magnolia;
 Summer and sunshine and roses galore;
 Song of the mocking bird,
 Morning and evening heard;
 Murmurous waves breaking white on the shore.

Fogs marching up from the breast of the ocean;
 Languorous moons sailing into the west;
 Fruitage of tree and vine,
 All the year summertime;
 Harbor of safety and haven of rest.

LA JOLLA *

THE land's-end and here of rugged mould,
 Fronts grim and grand the tossing sea,
 Its rock-strewn ledges, fold on fold,
 Withstand the water's battery;
 Its caverns where the waves make moan
 Are spiked with columns carved from stone.

* California.

Those caves, dark-mouthed, mysterious,
 Ingulf the eddying, swirling tide,
And beat their prey delirious,
 With dash and lash from side to side
Through corridor and vaulted dome,
Then hurl it forth in froth and foam.

Behold this rock's storm-chiseled face:
 His giant arms that seaward reach
To bar its progress. See the grace
 Of yonder crescent-curving beach
Where bathers sport and children play,
From June to June the year's long day.

THE CALIFORNIA POPPY

FLOWER of the west-land with calyx of gold,
 Swung in the breeze over lace-woven sod;
 Filled to the brim with the glory of God,
All that its wax-petaled chalice can hold.
This was the birth of it: On the brown plain,
The sun dropped a kiss in the footprint of rain.

SUNSET ON THE PACIFIC COAST

FROM his high throne the mighty Ruler of the days,
 Bends down and downward to the fond embrace
Of Ocean's arms. Upon her bosom lays
 The glory of his bright, enraptured face,
And flushes all her being with his gaze.

A PROPHECY

SWING wide ye glad portals of promise,
Swing wide to the millions who wait,
With songs on their lips, and with curses,
Close crowding Truth's luminous gate.

They come with their burdens, these people,
Fanatic and martyr and saint,
With language profane and prophetic,
In garments rich, simple and quaint.

They come from the populous city,
From village and mountain and wood,
Though each is a victim of evil,
Still all are the children of good.

They lived in the garden of Eden;
They were Christian and heathen of old,
Their hearts beat the record of ages,
In throbbings fierce, timid and bold.

They come with centuries of sorrow,
Of wrongs unrequited and vast;
They are weighted with superstitions
Handed down through all ages past.

They press their inheritance vanward,
In the glow of the eventide;
But who shall be first to enter in
When the portals of Truth stand wide?

No red-handed hero of battle;
No Nero; no monster of greed;
No hypocrite hiding dishonor
Behind the bulwark of his creed.

Neither the slave nor the weakling,
For slavery and weakness are sin,
But he who hath drawn from the fullness
Of God's love shall first enter in.

No soft, yielding goddess of pleasure,
But she who is steadfast and strong,
Whose heart is the safeguard of nations;
Whose voice is the slayer of wrong.

For love in the true heart of woman
Is working redemption at length,
And th' children she bore in her weakness
Shall rejoice with her in her strength.

A grander inheritance waiteth
In th' fullness of rapture to come,
For when we have climbed to the highlands
The voice of the past shall be dumb.

Already the leaven is working;
A purer religion is taught —
The glorious gospel of freedom;
The grand education of thought.

No longer will manhood, degraded,
Bow down beneath appetite's chain;
No longer will womanhood suffer
In bondage of custom and shame.

But each shall be strong for the other,
Life's labor and pleasure to share;
The curse will be lost in the blessing;
Thanksgiving will supersede prayer.

A PRAYER

THE lights are dim, I cannot see,
Truth seemeth false, the false seems true,
Dear Lord reveal the path to me;
Teach me, dear Lord, the thing to do.

Guide thou my tongue in ev'ry place;
With Love divine make known the way;
Grant me the blessing of thy grace;
Teach me, dear Lord, the thing to say.

RHYMES FOR THE CHILDREN

COME with me wee lad and lassie,
 Out into the fields of May,
Where the happy birds are singing;
 Where flow'r faces crowd the way,
And I'll tell you pretty stories
 All the live-long Springtime day.



THE QUEEN'S GIFT

WHERE English daisies blossom, and English robins
sing,
When all the land was fragrant beneath the feet of
Spring.

Two little sisters wandered together, hand in hand,
Along the dusty highway, their bare feet soiled and
tanned.

'Twas not a childish sorrow that dimmed their eyes
with tears;
Their little hearts were burdened, with grief beyond
their years.
The bright-eyed daisies blossomed in valley and in
glen;
The robins sang their sweetest, spring smiled, but not
for them.

Beneath the trees of Whitehall, within their shadows
brown;
From out the royal palace the queen came walking
down.
She saw the children standing together, side by side,
And gazing down with pity she asked them why they
cried.

"Dear Lady," said the eldest, "my little sister Bess
And I, have come together, a hundred miles, I guess.
Sometimes the roads were dusty and sometimes they
were green.
We got so tired and hungry. We want to see the
queen.

"Our mother's sick, dear lady. She cries 'most all the
day.
We hear her telling Jesus when she thinks we're at
play;

She tells him all about it, how, when King James was
king,
We were so rich and happy and had most every thing.

“We had our own dear father, at home beside the
Thames;
But father went to battle because he loved King James.
And then things were so different, I cannot tell you
how —
We haven't any father, nor any nice things now.

“Last night our mother told us they'd take our home
away,
And leave us without any, because she couldn't pay.
So, then, we came together right through the meadows
green,
We prayed for God to help us, and take us to the
queen.

“Because our mother told us that, many years ago,
The queen was James' little girl, and, lady, if 'twas so
I *know* she'll let us keep it—our home beside the
Thames,
For father went to battle because he loved King James.

“If we should have to leave it, I'm sure our mother'd
die,
For there's no place to go to—no place but in the
sky,”

Her simple story finished she gazed up in surprise
To see the lovely lady with tear-drops in her eyes.

And when the English daisies, dew-damp had gone to
rest;
And when the English robins had sought each downy
nest,
A carriage, such as never had passed that way before,
Let down two little children beside the widow's door.

They brought the weeping mother a letter from the
queen,
Her royal seal was on it, and folded in between,
A slip of paper, saying; "The daughter of King James,
Gives to these little children their home beside the
Thames."

CRIPPLE JOE

DEAR lady, I'm so glad you've come
To visit little "Cripple Joe,"
I'll tell you all about my home.

And all the things you want to know.
That small, three-cornered place of blue,
Is all I've seen of God's great sky.
Sometimes the round-faced moon looks through,
And smiles and nods and hurries by.

Beyond the window is a place
Where, once a day, the sun looks down.
I reach my hand across the space —
See! how his lips have kissed it brown.
The dear warm Sun! he comes to me
To fill my little world with light;
How glorious the hills must be.
When my one corner is so bright.

This is my flower. I've never seen
The meadows gay with golden bloom.
But just this little spot of green,
Brings meadow gladness to my room.
Ben brings me treasures ev'ry day.
Those pretty pictures on the wall;
This broken vase; that bit of clay —
I can't begin to tell you all.

I see the big world through his eyes;
Such beautiful and wondrous things,
He's like a book, so good and wise —
He's like an angel — when he sings.

Enough to eat? Yes, lady, we
Have such good suppers ev'ry night
When Ben comes home. But, sometimes, he
Don't seem to have much appetite.

Most always there's an orange peel
For desert, or an apple core;
Sometimes a whole one, round and real!
What could a fellow ask for more?
I'm happy, for God bids me stay
Right here with Ben. It's better so.
I have all that I need each day,
And know all that God gives to know.

My sky might never seem so blue;
My blossom never seem so sweet,
If once I saw the grander view,
Or meadow blossoms kissed my feet.
If once I ran like other boys,
My crippled feet would taunt me then.
I do not care for other joys,
It is enough that I have Ben.

You say that you've adopted Ben —
He's — such — a — prince — of — boys, and — *he*
Sent you up here to find our den?
And *me too — you've adopted me?*
And there are whole skies full of blue
For us, and meadow blossoms sweet?
Whole oranges, and apples too?
And some great man will *cure my feet?*

I've watched for angels to come through
My window like the soft-winged air;
I've kept it wide for *them*, but *you*
Came up the creaking, dusty stair.

I've thought of Heaven until it seemed
I almost understood its worth,
But, oh! I never thought, or dreamed,
That God would send it down to earth.

WHAT SANTA CLAUS BROUGHT

THEY sat in a row at grandma's,
Three little dimpled girls;
Rosy and sweet, from head to feet,
Bundles of bliss, just right to kiss,
Tangles of yellow curls,
The dearest, darlingest, dimpled band
That ever stepped out of baby land.

"Oh, my!" said Dottie Wimple,
Her wee hands clasped in glee,
"Such lots an' lots of goodies
My Santa Claus bringed me.
My stockings new, all red an' blue,
Were podded out, an' just about
Stretched big enough for grandma's feet,
From top to toe brim full of sweet."

"Well, Santa Claus was better
To *me* than anything,"
Said little May in rapture,
"I never fout he'd bring
A doll 'at cries an' shuts its eyes.
Now, Bettie Bet, what did *you* get?
Your Santa Claus is poor I know,
'Cause papa told my mamma so."

"My Santa Claus," cried Bettie,
"Is richer'n any other,
He brought the richest present
To me an' to my mother,

It was — oh, you can't guess it,
 A darling little brother.
He kicks, an' cries, an' shuts his eyes,
An' he is sweet enough to eat.
I'd rather have my baby brother
Than dolls or candy; so had mother."

THE CHRISTMAS DOLL

I'LL tell you all about it, Tom,
 Because you wasn't here.
You 'member little Minnie Clair?
 Whose papa died last year.
She lives with her Aunt Jane, you know,
 But in her aunty's home,
The happy Christmas mornings
 With their presents never come.
She never had a dolly, Tom,
 In all her life before,
Not e'en a little, teenty one,
 And I've got twenty-four.

And so, when Christmas morning came,
 And all our pretty toys
Were scattered 'round about the room.
 I whispered to the boys:
"How sorry little Min must be
 When Christmas morning comes,
She never gets a single thing,
 Not even sugar plums."
And Fred looked just as sober then,
 And Dick looked sober too.
"It's such a shame," said Dick at last,
 "I'll tell you what we'll do.
There's books and toys a plenty here,
 And sugar plums, and such,

Suppose we give her some of ours?
We wouldn't miss it much."
"All right," said Fred, "here's Noah's ark,
I'll give her this, you see."
Then Dick laid out a picture book,
And then they looked at me.

I took my newest dolly up,
The sweetest of them all,
It seemed as though my heart would break;
My tears began to fall
Upon her lovely yellow hair.
Oh! Tom, you cannot know
How hard it was for me to let
My precious dolly go.

But when they sent for little Min,
And papa gave the book,
And Noah's ark, she took them with
A bright and happy look.
But, oh! you should have seen her eyes,
When papa turned about,
And, taking off its little shawl,
Handed the dolly out.
She laid its cheek against her own,
She kissed it, then she cried;
And I was just as happy, for
I'd twenty-four beside.

FOUR LITTLE GIRLS

WHEN I'm naughty I am Bess;
Pout my lips and cry,
No one loves me then, I guess.
Mamma says, "Oh, my!

What a naughty girl is Bess;
Wish she'd go away;
Wish our darling little Beth
Would come back to stay."

When I'm Beth I help mamma
Sweep, and dust the chairs;
Set the table, carry things
Up and down the stairs.
But I'm Bessie when papa
Takes me on his knee;
Holds me close, and says that he
Loves all four of me.

Sunday I'm Elizabeth,
In my dress so blue,
With a feather in my hat,
And a posy, too;
Walk so straight beside mamma
To the church, and then,
Sit beside her in a box,
Till the last amen.

LITTLE BIRD GRAY

A LITTLE bird came to our home one day,
A dear little mother-bird dressed in gray.
She stood on a limb of the cherry tree,
And she winked her little black eye at me,
As much as to say, "Oh! yes, I have heard
Of boys before, but a little gray bird
Will be safe with *you*, so I'll build," said she,
"A beautiful nest in this cherry tree.

“Around by the kitchen door on a mat,
Asleep in the sun is a big black cat,
And out by the woodshed, gnawing a bone,
Is a dreadful dog, they are both your own.
And here is my nest. Now what will you do?
Will you help me keep it, little boy blue?
Will you drive the dog and cat away?
When they come too near,” sang little bird gray.

“Will you help me? Will you? little boy blue.”
The dear little gray bird, what could I do
But promise? and Towser and Tab must stay
In the barn till the birds have flown away.
There are four in the nest, such hungry things.
With big, yellow mouths and queer little wings.
Their mother and I work hard as can be,
To feed those birds in the cherry tree.

WHERE THEY FOUND HIM

OH, where is the royal baby? Have you seen him?
Do you know?
There's a panic in the palace as they hurry to and fro;
There's a throng of troubled faces. Grandma, grandpa,
hear them call,
Papa, mamma, aunts and uncles, up the stairs and down
the hall;
In the meadow where the clover calls the busy honey-
bees,
By the brook and through the orchard, in and out
among the trees
'Neath the rafters where the hay-mow rises in a fra-
grant dome.
Oh, where is the royal baby? Where's the little king
of home?

Now some modern Mother Hubbard with her glasses
on her nose,
Thinks of the old storage cupboard, which she hastens
to unclose,
And behold his royal highness, sleeping in that narrow
place,
With the sugar-box beside him, and a jam-spot on his
face.
From the meadow where the clover fills the air with
fragrance sweet,
From the brookside, from the orchard, come the eager,
gladsome feet,
And they kiss the merry monarch seated on his rightful
throne,
For they've found the royal baby, found the little king
of home.

WHAT CURED DOLLY

LAST night we went to bed, Dolly and I,
But when I waked up it was light, and, oh, my!
A queer thing happened while we were asleep,
The Brownies came into my room, creep, creep;
And Dolly, who'd been sick the longest spell,
They took her and cured her and made her well.
She had a disease of the eyes, poor dear.
They both dropped in, and it made her look queer.

Then, one day, when we was up in a tree,
She fell, and broke both of her arms, oh, me!
And Towser he shook off her hair beside —
It hurt her awful and both of us cried.
Mamma said that Dolly was such a disgrace,
That she'd buy a new one to take her place;
But I asked her, if *I* was sick would *she*
Get another child in the place of me?

I hugged and I kissed my Dolly, and then
Mamma said she'd send for the Brownie men.
And here is my Dolly as good as new.
Her hair has growed in, and is curly, too;
Her eyes are both straight, and each little place
The measles left has gone from her face;
Her arms are as good as before she fell,
And it was the Brownies who made her well.

MAMMA'S HELPERS

WHERE have you been little laddie and lassie?
Shaking the dew from the flow'rs with your feet
Down where the meadow lies fragrant and grassy,
Where its green bank and the brook waters meet?
Jonquil and daffodil, clover and daisy,
Bloom by the wayside, so easy to get;
Why do you seek for the little gold cowslip?
Knee-deep in meadow grass, tangled and wet?

"We're helping mamma, we sell the green cowslips,
All the town people are ready to buy.
With baskets a-swinging, we both go singing,
For we're mamma's helpers, Bessie and I."

Working for mamma! Ah, yes, I should know it,
Two brighter faces I never have seen,
Beaming with love in the dew of the morning,
Dear little peddlers with baskets of green.
What will you do when the summer advances?
When the sun shines hot on meadow and lawn,
How will you then earn the pennies for mamma?
What will you do when the cowslips are gone?

“Down in the field are the blackberry patches;
We know where to find them, Bessie and I,
With baskets a-swinging, we'll both go singing,
For all the town people like blackberry pie.”

CONTENTED TED

“**W**HEN Winter comes, then winter's best
With snow and skates and sled,
And furry cap and overcoat
To keep you warm,” said Ted,
“All snug and warm when cold winds blow,”
Said merry little Ted.

“But when the pretty posies come,
The blue, and white and red;
When birds are singing in the trees,
Then Spring is best,” said Ted,
“The sunny spring that melts the snow,
And brings the flow'rs,” said Ted.

“And Summer's best in berry time,
When my big brother Fred
And I go fishing in the brook,
On grandpa's farm,” said Ted.
“Right where the willows make a nook
For fish to bite,” said Ted.

“When Jack Frost opens chestnut burrs,
And leaves turn brown and red;
When grapes are ripe and apples too.
Then Autumn's best,” said Ted,
“For that is when Thanksgiving comes
At grandma's house,” said Ted.

“And which of all do I like best?”

He raised his yellow head,

“Why, don’t you see it’s just the time

I’m living in,” said Ted.

“The best of all is just the time

I’m living in,” said Ted.

FEBRUARY IN CALIFORNIA

DID you hear them stirring before they came?

As they whispered low together,
Deep in their mother’s warm, brown breast,
All through the rainy weather.

Did you hear their laughter, the pretty things?

As they talked their secret over,
And buzzed like a swarm of honey-bees,
Turned loose in a field of clover.

And then they revealed it, the glad surprise

Of these little merry makers,
And spread a carpet of rain-bow dyes
Down over a thousand acres.

The carpet is yellow and blue and pink,

Woven in many a pattern,
There are squares, and diamonds and circling belts,
Like the yellow belts of Saturn.

There are fields of gold-whole poppy fields —

Oh, the land is color crazy;
Purple, and yellow and lavender,
Under the warm sky hazy.

Dashes of color, and shouts of glee,

All in the winter weather,
For the flow’rs of earth and the human flow’rs
Are out on the hills together.

MUD PIES

LITTLE boy in round-a-bout,
Knickerbockers, hat without
Band or rim-piece. Sturdy man,
Earnest eyes and face of tan.
Little girl upon whose cheek
Dimples play at hide-and-seek.
See them work with busy hands
Making mud pies in the sands.

Cups of water, quick as thought,
From the shady well are brought.
Leaves for dishes — cherries red —
Sometimes stones are used instead.
Rolling out the crust so thin,
Putting stones and cherries in.
Dirt bespattered dress and hands,
Making mud pies in the sands.

On the well-curb white as snow,
Little pies all in a row,
Dented round by dimpled thumb,
Stand there baking in the sun.
Pumpkin, mince or apple pie!
Here's your choice, now who will buy?
But the bakers, bless their eyes!
They are eating mother's pies.

WHEN I AM A MAN

1st boy — I'm going to be a farmer, and sow the field
with grain.
And then I'll watch it grow and grow in sun-
shine and in rain.

I'll raise the very nicest wheat that anybody
can,
For I'm going to be a farmer when I get to
be a man.

Class — Oh, jolly, jolly farmer when the harvest
time is through,
We'll come from all the country round and
buy our wheat of you.

2nd boy — I'm going to be a merchant and sell my
goods to all.
I'll have thin cloths for summer time and
woolen cloths for fall,
I'm going to give good measure and do the
best I can,
For I'm going to be a merchant when I get
to be a man.

Class — Oh, when we go a-shopping as the people
always do,
Because you give good measure we will buy
our clothes of you.

3rd boy — I'm going to be a doctor, and when a body's
ill
I'll give a sugar powder and a little sugar
pill.
I've seen our doctor do it, and I'm very sure
I can.
Oh, I'm going to be a doctor when I get to
be a man.

Class — We'll remember all you tell us about the
sugar pill.
You may be sure, dear doctor, we will send
for you when ill.

TWO BENS

THEY sat out under the apple tree,
Two little, dear little men.
Discussing the wondrous truths of life;
Grandpa and five-year-old Ben.
One had the wisdom of ripened years;
The knowledge of men and books,
The other, fresh from the hand of God,
Had knowledge of birds and brooks.

“I’ll tell you about the birds, my dear,
How the robin and the wren —”

“I know, they nest in the apple tree,
And live on the worms,” said Ben.

“And the honey-bees that give us sweet,
What do you know of them?”

“They find the honey in posy cups,
And that is the how,” said Ben.

“And the little downy chicks, my dear,
That follow the mother hen?”

“She hatched them out of the eggs she laid
In the hay-mow nest,” said Ben.

“The flowers they cuddle, cuddle down
When the winter comes, and then
God covers them up to keep them warm,
Till Spring gets back,” said Ben.

“Alas, and alack! he knows it all.
My three score years and ten
Just balance the scales of life with five,”
Sighed dear old grandfather Ben.
A head of silver and one of gold,
Dreaming of books and toys,
Nodded together and then they slept,
Two little, dear little boys.

A KISS FOR MAMMA

THE car was all ready, the bird-man saying
A few last words ere he sailed away
To the far, blue sky where the sunbeams straying
Made perfect the golden summer day;
While thousands of people were gathering nigh,
To wish him good journey, and bid him good-bye.

A wee little maid, her sunny hair falling
Back from her beautiful childish brow,
Escaped from her nurse, her baby voice calling:
"O, p'ease, Mister Man, may I go now?
For I wants to go up wiv you in 'e sky,
To find my own mamma an' tiss 'er good-bye."

He kissed the fair face while tear-drops were shining
On many a cheek hardened by care;
He unclasped the arms round his neck entwining,
And sailed from th' little one standing there;
But a sweet voice arose to him, clear and free,
"Tell mamma I's good girl, an' tiss 'er for me."

MAMMA'S BREAD-WINNERS

A CROSS the green meadow, beyond the green glen,
Come two little women and two little men;
The youngest is five, and the oldest is ten.

Eyes brim-full of mischief has each little man,
Such merry round faces all coated with tan,
And brave hearts whose motto is always, "I can."

The bluest of blue in the bright summer skies
Is never so blue as the four laughing eyes
Of those little women, so loving and wise.

Across the green meadows, where cool breezes blow,
In a place that only these little ones know,
The largest and sweetest of blackberries grow.

With pails, when the morning smiles rosy and red,
Come Annie and Fannie and Tommy and Ted;
For mamma is ill, and dear papa is dead.

Beside the green meadow a white village lies,
Close-cuddled and cozy, beneath the blue skies;
And all the dear people like blackberry pies.

Their pails are soon emptied of berries, and then
Are filled with brown bundles, and two little men
Have "chinks" in their pockets when crossing the glen.

TWO LITTLE BEGGARS

UP through th' valley of babyland two
Little beggars have come to town,
The eyes of one are the brightest blue,
The eyes of the other are brown.

They beg all day for "a story, please,"
These two little, dear little men;
They crowd my side and climb to my knees,
With faces uplifted, and then:

"Tell us a story about Jack Frost;
'Bout the snow that came with a whirl
That day when the kitty-cat was lost,
When mamma was your little girl.

"Jack and his bean; the three little bears,
And one that you never have told;
Tell us another, and then one other,"
Cry these little beggars so bold.

They beg all day — oh, what shall I do?
With beggars that climb to my knees,
And beg for stories the whole day through;
Such dear little beggars as these.

PUTTING THE FLOWERS TO BED

“**C**OME little children, come go to bed,”
Dear mother Nature is calling.
“For the maple leaves are turning red;
They are turning red, and falling.
And now they are coming, one by one,
Each dear little wayside posy.
They danced all day in the summer sun,
When the hours were long and rosy.

They all were dressed in their very best,
When the springtime skies were mellow,
There were velvet gowns in reds and browns;
There were silks in blue and yellow.
Oh! what a rustle, oh! what a mess,
Oh! what a clatter and racket,
For every lass has torn her dress,
And every lad his jacket.

Now their mother is calling them home:
“Oh! come Sweet William, come Daisy;
Come Phlox, Verbena and Goldenrod,
Dear me, are the children crazy!”
And now she cuddles and tucks them down,
With soft caresses and kissing.
She clasps them close in her warm arms brown,
And never a child is missing.

A SONG OF THE SCHOOLROOM

SING a song of the schoolroom,
 Where the cares of life begin;
 Of books and slates and curly pates;
 Of its silence; of its din;
 Of lessons learned; of merits earned;
 Of its sweet good-will and strife,
 Of enemies met and conquered
 On this battle field of life.

Sing a song of the schoolroom,
 With its happy girls and boys.
 Of faces sweet; of restless feet;
 Of its trials and its joys.
 Where golden seeds of kindly deeds,
 And noblest aims are rife.
 Oh, sing a song of the schoolroom,
 And the seeding place of life.

THE DRINK OF GOD

THE drink that comes from heaven
 Is the drink for you and me,
 It flashes in the river,
 And it sparkles in the sea;
 The birds and blossoms drink it,
 And why not you and me?

The birds are never tipsy;
 They drink the drink of God
 Each pretty bright-faced Gipsy,
 Flower children of the sod,
 In caps of gold and scarlet,
 Preach us sermons as we pass;
 Their brains are never muddled
 By the poison in the glass.

THE DISOBEDIENT DOLL

I'LL have to punish you, Dolly,
You've disobeyed me again,
You stay'd out doors with the fairies,
Naughty Elizabeth Jane.
You played out there in the moonlight,
And tore your prettiest dress;
But when it was dark and lonesome,
Then you was afraid, I guess.

I'll have to punish you awful,
I've such a trial in you,
To think you'd stay with the fairies
The whole of the long night through.
The queen, was she pretty? Tell me
All about each little elf.
Oh, yes, I must whip you, but, Dolly,
I'd like to stay out myself.

You don't look real happy, Dolly,
Were the fairies bad to you?
They made you stay on the doorstep
The whole of the long night through?
They pulled your hair, and they slapped you?
They were rude to you, and rough?
Come here to your mamma, Dolly,
I think you've been punished enough.

INDIAN LULLABY

ROCK-A-BY, baby, your cradle is swinging
On a low branch of the sycamore tree.
Rock-a-by, baby, the mocking-bird singing,
Sings you to sleep in the sycamore tree.
Rock-a-by, rock-a-by, little one sleep.

Blue is the sky with the moon sailing through it.
 Father's a hunter, he hunts the wild deer,
 Brother is riding his Indian pony,
 Mother is watching the camp kettle near.
 Rock-a-by, rock-a-by, little one sleep.

Rock-a-by, rock-a-by, little brown baby,
 Tied to a branch of the sycamore tree.
 One of these days you will be a brave hunter,
 Little brown baby so happy and free.
 Rock-a-by, rock-a-by, little one sleep.

A LULLABY SONG

DROOP little coverlids over the blue;
 Little white coverlids fringed with gold;
 Mother voice singing you,
 Mother arms swinging you
 Mother love clasping you, fold on fold.

Rest little golden-head, on mother's breast,
 She will watch over you while you sleep;
 Dream of her loving eyes;
 Dream of the starry skies,
 Mother is guarding you while you sleep.

Lullaby, lullaby, little one sleep,
 Sunlight and daylight fade in the west;
 Mother is holding you,
 Mother is folding you
 Safe in the heart of her while you rest.

THE WHITE PARADE

HARK! grandfather's clock is striking eight.

And the books and toys are laid
Away for the night. 'Tis getting late.

'Tis time for the white parade.

Now they are coming, the bare, pink feet;

An army all dressed in white;

A sleepy army with kisses sweet;

“Good-night, dear papa, good-night.”

Come little soldiers, 'tis time to march,

The captain follows her band

Through the parlor and under the arch,

Up stairs into sleepy-land.

Baby is perched on his throne of love,

A gold-headed king in white.

The army shouts from the hall above:

“Good-night, dear papa, good-night.”

And now a silence is in the room

Where the little cots are laid,

As through the window the silver moon

Smiles down on the white parade

Kneeling a moment at mamma's feet,

Each little form in white,

Then clasping her close with round arms sweet,

“Good-night, dear mamma, good-night.”

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